

THE NEW REPUBLIC

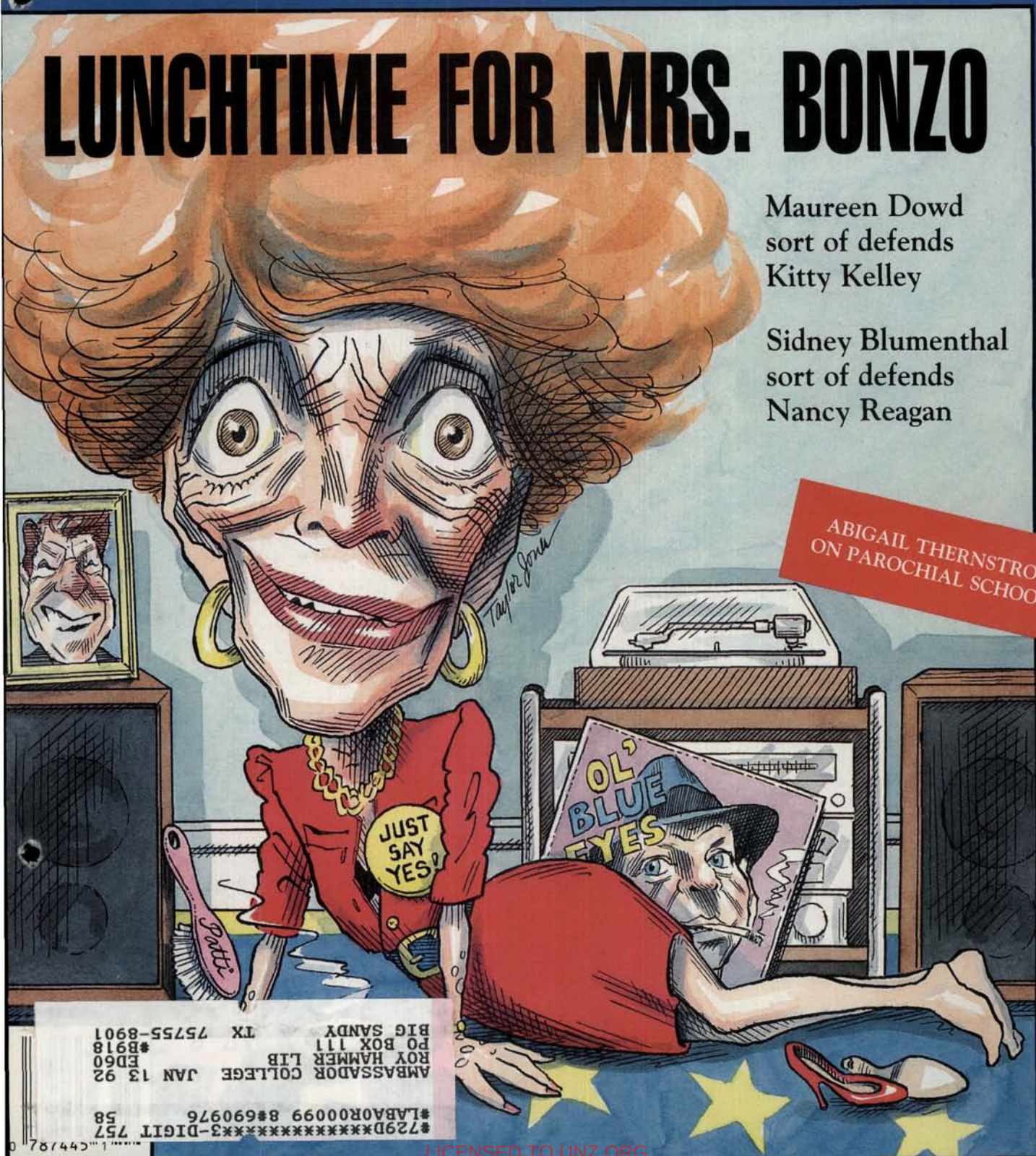
Up the (American) workers, by Robert B. Reich • Robert Brustein on 'Miss Saigon'

LUNCHTIME FOR MRS. BONZO

Maureen Dowd
sort of defends
Kitty Kelley

Sidney Blumenthal
sort of defends
Nancy Reagan

ABIGAIL THERNSTROM
ON PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS



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ON THIS BY NOW
if I didn’t have to take
S O M A N Y
naps.”

SARAH BAGWELL, AGE 4, Cardome Center, Georgetown, Kentucky

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How great will the impact of this project be? We’re not sure.

Although we hope that some day Sarah and her trusty computer will be able to give us the answer.

TOYOTA

INVESTING IN THE INDIVIDUAL

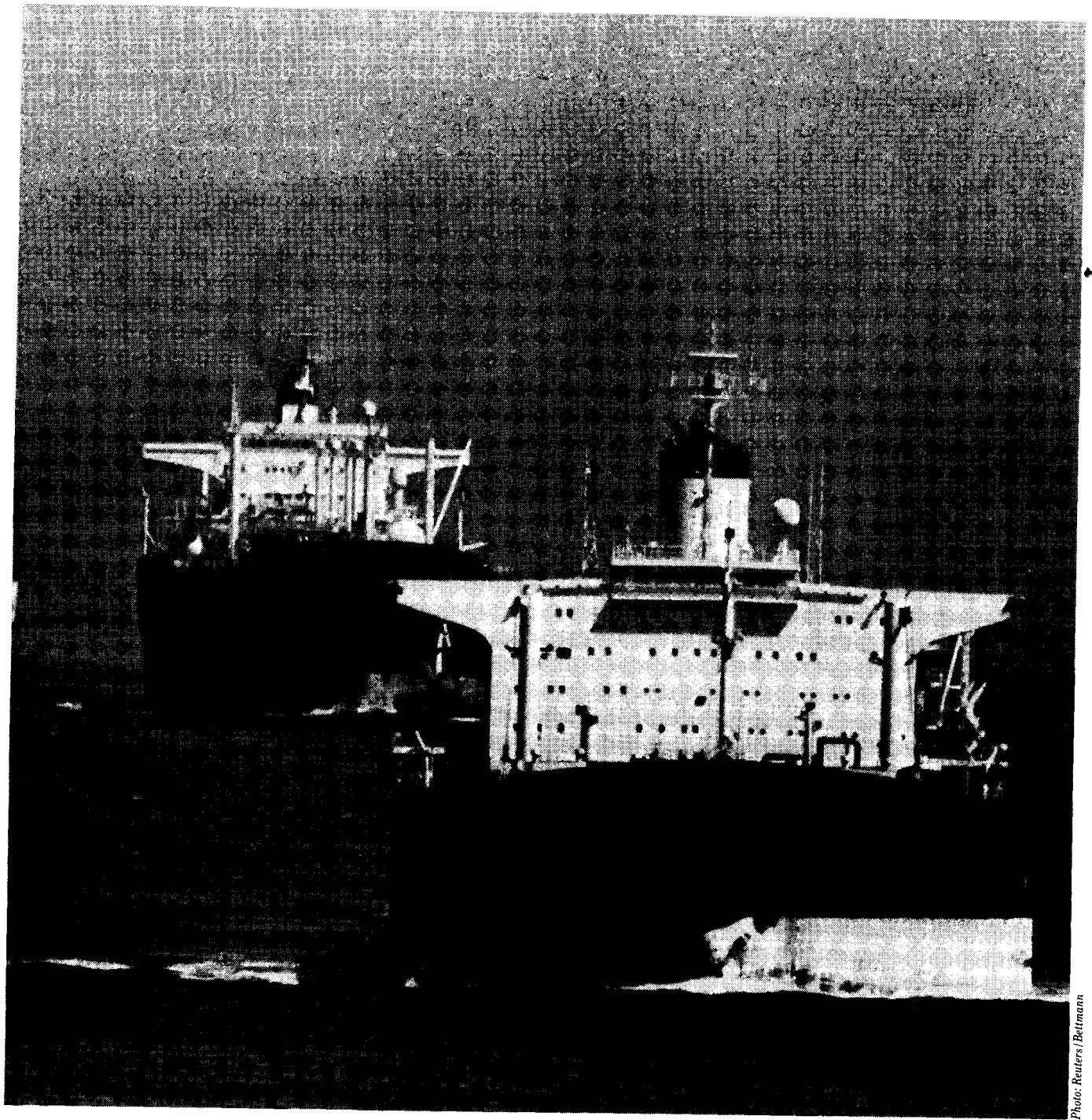


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CORRESPONDENCE

China towns

To the editors:

Steven Mosher's proposal to condition the renewal of China's most-favored-nation status ("Year of the Phoenix," April 29) is curious when weighed against his comments on the provinces. As he accurately points out, the trend toward Chinese neofederalism has become especially marked in recent months. Guangdong leads the way because it has freed a fair portion of its economy from the shackles of the old national structure. Yet small-scale export processing enterprises in the province's villages and townships depend on continuing access to markets in the United States, as well as the continued stability of the Hong Kong economy. Remove MFN and we pull the legs out from under this growing economic base.

Mr. Mosher and other detractors of the president's China policy are correct to criticize the administration for its lackluster emphasis on human rights in high-level discussions with Chinese leaders. To remove one of the pillars of the South China economy, however, merely undercuts the leverage on which the province's growing independence from the center has been premised.

EVAN FEIGENBAUM
Ann Arbor, Michigan
(Via 900 number)

Hide and leak

To the editors:

You wasted a lot of space printing Representative Dave McCurdy's press release, in which he demanded more powers for the CIA and hence for his own Intelligence Committee ("Why Spy?" April 1). The nation would be better served, and taxpayers would save billions of dollars, if we simply dismantled all non-electronic spying activities.

First, because policy-makers never listen to their own analysts. All of us bureaucratic veterans can cite many instances when policy-makers dismissed advice with some version of "If you were any good, you wouldn't be working here." Henry Kissinger, of course, was the master of this approach, but the quintet who ran the latest international caper (Bush/Baker/Cheney/Powell/Scowcroft) closely followed the master's example.

Second, spying should be scrapped because secret information is worthless in-

formation. As TNR should know, the truth emerges only from the unceasing exchange of information in the marketplace—with input from scholars, diplomats, journalists, business people, and others—and not from the use of classification stamps on isolated bits of information. As Representative McCurdy should know, the truth about the Iraqi situation was out there in the marketplace; policy-makers just didn't bother asking for it.

Finally, spying should go because secret institutions undermine democracy. Remember Richard Nixon? Oliver North?

WILLIAM M. BURKE
San Francisco, California

Missionary impositions

To the editors:

The point that seems to be lost in all the discussion about the gays and lesbians insisting upon marching with their banners in the St. Patrick's Day parade ("Ex Cathedra," April 22) is that the sexual preference of a group is not enough of a reason for its being in a parade that celebrates a national/ethnic group.

If I were to start an association to propagate the missionary position, what right would I have to demand that the Irish include my fellow members in the ranks of the marchers, with our banners declaring our sexual proclivities?

PETER J. F. HUSSEY
Rowayton, Connecticut

To the editors:

In "Ex Cathedra" you point out that the Roman Catholic Church does not condemn homosexual feelings, or dispositions, but only homosexual acts. Therefore, you contend, it was doctrinally wrong from a Catholic viewpoint to condemn the homosexual marchers at the St. Patrick's Day parade. Are you saying that the marchers championed the legitimacy of homosexual feelings and not of homosexual acts? Are you serious?

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York, New York

To the editors:

John Cardinal O'Connor and columnist Patrick Buchanan should be criticized for more than their attitude toward the gay community. They presume (and you

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did not challenge them) that St. Patrick's Day is a Roman Catholic celebration.

St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. His mission to Ireland took place centuries before the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. All Episcopal Christian churches in Ireland look to St. Patrick as their founding bishop. Indeed, St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin is a seat of the major Protestant denomination—the Church of Ireland.

Irish does not equal Catholic. Modern Ireland has come to recognize this and has begun to respect all its national traditions. Cave-dwellers such as the cardinal and the columnist should be reminded of this.

JOHN BEN TONRA
Washington, D.C.

Back to the future

To the editors:

I was surprised to read Stephen Holmes's decidedly illiberal review of Christopher Lasch's *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* ("The Wrong and Winding Road," March 25). Since the primary aim of Mr. Lasch's book is to recover the many strands of a rich and largely forgotten argument against progress that emerged over the past three centuries, how is it that the reviewer has virtually nothing to say about Mr. Lasch's actual interpretation of such diverse dissenters as William Cobbett, Orestes Brownson, Henry George, Thomas Carlyle, Jonathan Edwards, Emerson, William James, Georges Sorel, G. D. H. Cole, Herbert Croly, and Reinhold Niebuhr?

Instead Mr. Holmes caricatures Mr. Lasch's original and nuanced discussion of contemporary political disputes. This strategy not only misleads the reader about the historical character of the study, it also obscures Mr. Lasch's important insight into the way the past persists into the present: by airing already existing and long repressed criticisms of progress, we might be able to reinvigorate and move beyond the ossified terms of contemporary debates about busing, abortion, and racism. We also might begin to become suspicious of the way liberals in the past—and apparently in the present—have used epithets such as "nostalgic," "backward-looking," "romantic," "idealistic," and "fascist" to discredit the many thoughtful people who have had profound reservations about the often unintended consequences of the cult of progress.

Instead of calling for a balance-sheet approach toward progress, Mr. Holmes, and by extension all of us, would be better served by addressing Mr. Lasch's arguments head-on. For example, is the democratization of consumption that Mr.

continued on page 41

MAY 13, 1991

OKTOBERFUSS

For the last six years believers in the "October Surprise"—the theory that Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign engineered a delay in the release of Iran's American hostages until after the election—have been dismissed as partisans, paranoids, or worse. This may have been partly a case of guilt by association. Until last week the principal advocates of the theory were the usual suspects on the conspiratorial left, plus a disgruntled ex-Reagan staffer named Barbara Honegger. Naturally, most people chose to ignore their claims. Anyhow, after the emotionally unsatisfying Iranamok scandal, there was little public appetite for a byzantine sequel involving shadowy Iranian arms dealers and rogue CIA operatives.

Lately, though, the October Surprise has taken a turn for the credible. After two years of investigation, Gary Sick, a former Navy captain and Ford administration appointee to the National Security Council staff who monitored Iran during the Carter administration, has declared that he has reluctantly come to believe that the Reagan campaign did in fact strike an unsavory bargain with Iran. In 1980 Mr. Sick first heard—and dismissed—rumors that Reagan-Bush campaign operatives were engaging in subterranean negotiations with Iran. He made no mention of these rumors in *All Fall Down*, his well-regarded chronicle of the hostage crisis. Then, last week, Mr. Sick—who is now a professor of Middle East politics at Columbia University, where he is writing a book about the Reagan administration's policy toward Iran—explained in an article on the op-ed page of *The New York Times* why he has come to accept the gist of the story.

Mr. Sick may be wrong. But what if he's right? Stop for a minute and consider the implications. Questions of law-breaking aside, even an attempt at such a deal would have been an outrage. If the Reagan-Bush campaign sought to delay the release of the hostages for political gain, it would mean that America was held hostage as much by the Republican Party as by the Ayatollah Khomeini. The hostages were a national obsession; the Reagan-Bush ticket won its victory in part on the issue of President Carter's inability to free them. If Mr. Sick is right, Messrs. Reagan

and Bush were in effect, wittingly or unwittingly, their jailers during the campaign.

The most important new source for the story is Jamshid Hashemi, an Iranian arms dealer, who says he met with William Casey, then Mr. Reagan's campaign manager, in late February or early March 1980 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington. According to Mr. Sick, the story goes as follows: Mr. Casey told Mr. Hashemi he wanted to avoid an "October Surprise," which would benefit Mr. Carter—meaning a release of the hostages before the November election. Mr. Hashemi helped to arrange two more meetings, which Mr. Sick says took place in July, in a Madrid hotel, between Mr. Casey and Khomeini's representative, Mehdi Karrubi, who is now the speaker of the Iranian parliament. At the meetings, Mr. Sick says, Mr. Karrubi agreed to cooperate with the Reagan campaign about the timing of the hostages' release.

Around the time of the purported second Madrid meeting, Reagan campaign staffers are said to have made contact with senior Israeli officials, who agreed to act as a channel for arms Mr. Casey promised the Iranians—this according to two Israelis who identified themselves as former Mossad officials and who are Mr. Sick's sources. More meetings are alleged to have followed in Paris, in mid-October, at which Mr. Casey was again present, when the agreement was finalized. Some sources place the vice presidential candidate, Mr. Bush, at the meeting; Mr. Sick says he is agnostic on that question. That the meetings took place, however, is confirmed by numerous sources. Some are reliable and have names. Others are unreliable or anonymous. What impresses Mr. Sick is that fifteen sources, from different parts of the world, concur on a central proposition: that Mr. Casey met with Iranians in Madrid and Paris and cut a deal.

And there is circumstantial evidence to support the theory. On October 21 the Iranian government suddenly stopped demanding arms from the Carter administration in exchange for releasing the hostages. The Iranians made it clear to U.S. officials that the hostages would not in any event be released before the election. Within a few days Israel sent a planeload of F-4 aircraft



tires to Iran, in violation of the U.S. boycott, and without telling the Carter administration. Israel continued to send spare parts to Iran after the transition, but with the consent of high-level officials in the Reagan administration. (The Israelis, of course, had their own reasons for helping Iran: they were worried about Iraq before it became fashionable.)

Richard V. Allen, then a Reagan campaign staffer, acknowledges that during the period between the Madrid and Paris meetings he met with an Iranian emissary in another Washington hotel at the request of Robert "Bud" McFarlane, then a staff assistant to Senator John Tower. Mr. Allen says he took along a witness, Lawrence Silberman, who is now a federal judge, and agreed to talk only in the lobby of the hotel. He says he walked out when the Iranian—whose name he does not recall—proposed a deal to deliver the hostages. Neither Mr. Allen nor Mr. Silberman ever reported this extraordinary meeting to anyone in government, as they obviously ought to have done. However, it is known that Mr. Allen had a high-level mole informing him about Mr. Carter's efforts to get the hostages released. On October 10 Mr. Carter was alerted to top-secret preparations for a second rescue mission by the Delta Force. Within three days Mr. Allen knew about it, too. (Mr. Allen says he told Mr. Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, about the leak; Mr. Brzezinski says he has no record or recollection of being told.)

But did the Reagan campaign cut a deal? We know that in 1985 the Reagan administration traded arms to Iran for hostages. The possibility that it traded arms to Iran for a delayed release of hostages is not so patently absurd that it can be dismissed out of hand. It does seem farfetched that the supercautious George Bush would have traveled to Paris to meet Iranian agents a few weeks before the election. Being spotted might have meant plunging the campaign into a tawdry scandal. On the other hand, the Iranians might well have demanded his presence to guarantee the good faith of the campaign operatives who cut the deal, and Mr. Bush did have a reputation for being a good soldier. In any case, if the tale is in fact entirely spurious, it will be easy for Mr. Bush to disprove. Secret service and campaign records should document the candidate's whereabouts for the five days in question.

An alibi for Mr. Bush would not, however, discredit the possibility that others in the Reagan-Bush campaign might have negotiated, if not executed, a deal with the Iranians. This campaign became an administration, remember, whose national security adviser, Mr. McFarlane, flew to Tehran with a fake Irish passport, a chocolate layer cake, two .357 pistols, and a suicide pill. Mr. Casey in particular had a known penchant for such intrigues. Records from the Reagan campaign should show whether Mr. Casey went to Madrid. The campaign manager's date book should be part of the archive housed in the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Why haven't these materials been examined by Mr. Sick and others? Because the gatekeeper is Ed Meese, and he has refused to allow access to the pa-

pers. It is now his obligation to open them up.

Unfortunately, there is little pressure to resolve these questions. The press so far has shown little inclination to reopen the story. Congress isn't on the case either. If it were simply a case of private companies selling illegal arms to a hostile foreign power, it would already be investigating. As it is, the Democrats are loath to challenge a popular president with fragmentary evidence about things that happened ten years ago. This lack of enthusiasm is understandable. No one wants to be accused of pursuing a kooky story for self-serving ends, raising an issue of such sordid consequences in the afterglow of Desert Storm patriotism.

The danger in any congressional investigation is that it will propel partisans to the front, take on a prosecutorial air, and become an occasion for showboating. Precautions would have to be taken to avoid such shenanigans. The investigation need not be carried out by a special committee; nor would the hearings have to be a politicized affair intended to destroy the Bush presidency. One of the standing committees, like the House Foreign Affairs Committee or the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, could hold hearings on the October Surprise with the simple objective of finding the truth. Armed with subpoena power, Congress could obtain Reagan campaign records and compel testimony from such reluctant witnesses as Mr. McFarlane, former CIA operative Donald Gregg, and Robert Gates, the former deputy director of the CIA.

The alternative, of course, is for Mr. Bush to decide he wants the matter settled. This is something he could accomplish by bringing forward evidence, easily within his reach, that would prove that neither he nor Mr. Casey was involved. Ordinarily, a president might be expected to relish an opportunity to dispel a malicious slander and humiliate his foes. Why, we wonder, is Mr. Bush passing this one up?

NOTEBOOK

UNANSWERED QUESTION(S): Does the story that officials of the Reagan-Bush organization tried to make a deal with Iran to delay the release of the American hostages warrant investigation by Congress? Or, in the absence of further solid facts, should it be laid to rest? You can register your view by calling our Sound Off line, 1-900-726-6671. Respondents to our poll two weeks ago were adamant: 80 percent thought U.N. coalition forces should go to the aid of rebelling Kurds and Shiites, even if that meant U.S. casualties. Twenty percent said no.

WHITE ELEPHANT: It has recently come to light that White House chief of staff John Sununu used military jets, at a cost to the government of up to \$30,000 a shot, for personal and political trips, including Republican fund-raisers and a ski holiday in Vail. The White House

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has defended Mr. Sununu's use of the planes as part of a 1987 policy that requires the chief of staff to be in constant contact with the president. But the policy itself is absurdly wasteful. By what logic should the public pay hundreds of thousands of dollars so the chief of staff—who is nowhere in the line of succession, has no military authority and no constitutional powers whatsoever—can have a more reliable hotline? Sununu's predecessor, Howard Baker, got by with portable scramblers when flying commercial. The policy is a smoke screen to hide catering to spoiled aides. No one really wants the chief of staff to be able to reach the president at every second of the day, least of all the chief of staff. Did Mr. Sununu have a secure phone with him as he was plowing down the slopes?

PALM BEACH STORY: It's good to see that *New York Times* reporters care enough about their paper to protest an editorial goof. Last week hundreds vented their outrage over a profile of the alleged victim in the Kennedy rape scandal, whom the paper named, against its own past policy and that of most news outlets. *Times* editors defended the profile by saying they had cut out the most offensive parts. So what? The rest—a mass of seedy detail apparently designed to show that the accuser was a natural victim—might have been commissioned by the Kennedy Legal Defense fund. The *Times* was adamant through months of the Central Park jogger case that it would not name the victim. The paper's excuse for reversing itself in the Kennedy case is that NBC's broadcast of the alleged victim's name took the decision out of its hands. But the jogger's name was published by the *Amsterdam News*, and the *Times* felt no obligation to follow suit. Is it just that NBC is bigger? If NBC jumped off a cliff, would *The New York Times* jump, too? The *Times*, in case the *Times* has forgotten, is the newspaper of record. When the *Times* respects your privacy, it's being respected in a way that commands respect. And when the *Times* violates it, it stays violated. •

What did the administration really know?

KURDLED

By Morton Kondracke

Although the Democrats were wrong to oppose America's war against Saddam Hussein, they have every right to second-guess the administration's handling of the postwar endgame. The issue is not simply whether the Shiite-Kurdish refugee disaster takes the luster off President Bush's

historic victory; it's whether the administration was forewarned that a humanitarian nightmare would follow the victory, and cynically chose to do nothing about it.

Administration sources familiar with the output of the intelligence community say that the CIA and other agencies predicted last October, in documents widely distributed in Congress and the executive branch, that a U.S. victory in the Gulf war would likely lead to a "Lebanon-like situation" with "massive humanitarian problems." A full National Intelligence Estimate (the combining product of all U.S. intelligence agencies) predicted in January, just before the war started, that if Saddam's army was defeated, unrest would break out along Iraq's "traditional ethnic fault lines." In early February two CIA publications—the *International Economic and Energy Weekly* and the *Near East/South Asia Analytical Review*—reported that postwar refugees might number as many as 1.5 million, and that Iraq's neighbors were not prepared to deal with the flow. In February, two weeks before the war ended, the CIA told the administration that a civil war was brewing, that opposition groups remained disorganized, and that Saddam's internal security apparatus remained intact. Within two days of the war's end—and in spite of General Norman Schwarzkopf's statement that "the door was shut" to escaping Iraqi tanks—U.S. intelligence agencies reportedly concluded that 900 tanks had escaped, along with a large number of Republican Guards.

About the same time, as the Shiite revolt was beginning, the CIA reportedly concluded that the outcome depended on whether the rebellion spread to Iraq's military, 70 percent of which is Shiite, and to majority-Shiite Baghdad. If it did, the agency said, Saddam was in "mortal danger." If it didn't, he would prevail. Administration officials say that U.S. intelligence was skeptical that the revolt could succeed because the Shiites were organized "mosque by mosque" and because their rebellion was not coordinated with the Kurds in northern Iraq. The Kurds rose up when Saddam pulled his forces south to fight the Shiites. When the Shiites were beaten, the forces returned north and clobbered the Kurds. Both Kurds and Shiites limited their chances of success by executing captured prisoners, thereby discouraging defections.

Reportedly the intelligence community also warned that there was not much chance the Iraqi military would overthrow Saddam because he had purged it of potentially disloyal officers. And once the Shiites and Kurds started fighting, coup chances diminished further, because Saddam could rally his Sunni-dominated officer corps to protect their own rule.

This is damning stuff. It's possible, of course, that the top level of the administration simply didn't see the intelligence, or that the CIA's defenders overstate the agency's prescience. Senator Bill Bradley, a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has another theory: there was "a failure of intelligence," all right, but it stemmed from

"a closed policy process" in which Bush makes up his mind in the company of a small group of advisers and never asks the intelligence community what the consequences might be. Bradley thinks that Bush never inquired what might happen if he called upon the "Iraqi people," as well as the "Iraqi military" to oust Saddam. And he says that the public has a right to know whether, as various news organizations have reported, the CIA financed clandestine radios urging the Kurds and Shiites to rise up against Saddam.

Other Democrats, such as Representative Stephen Solarz and Senate Foreign Relations Committee staffer Peter Galbraith, contend that the administration was willfully ignorant about the potential aftermath of the war because it refused to have any contact with Iraqi opposition figures. Had it established those contacts, cut off in 1988 after complaints from Iraq and Turkey, it would have known that the Shiites and Kurds intended to rebel, but that they did not intend to dismember Iraq—only to pursue greater autonomy. They say the United States could have helped the rebels—by keeping the war going for a few more days to destroy Saddam's Republican Guards, or by shooting down Iraqi helicopters used against the rebels—without fear that Iran would emerge the new dominant power in the Gulf. Various administration critics charge that the refusal to intervene was the result of pressure from Saudi Arabia, which wanted Iraq intact and under Sunni Arab control as a counterweight to Shiite Iran.

Administration officials have answers to many of these charges but haven't been called upon to make them in a systematic way. On the betrayal of Kurds, aides say that Bush's statements that the "Iraqi military and the Iraqi people" should overthrow Saddam were not intended to mean that the United States would militarily support the rising, but exactly the opposite: that the United States would *not* do the job. The hope was that the Iraqi military would stage a coup. Without confirming that it was CIA-financed, officials say that the clandestine "Voice of Free Iraq" never assured rebels of U.S. assistance in an uprising and mainly quoted Iraqi dissidents calling for a military coup.

On the question of a secret Saudi agenda, officials say it was the administration's own desire to avoid a Vietnam-style "quagmire"—and not Saudi pressure—that led to the decision not to intervene militarily in Iraq's civil war. Had the administration shot down Iraqi helicopters, officials say, Saddam still would have beaten the rebels—unless the United States was willing to go after Iraqi tanks, artillery, and troops. Had it done that, they say, the United States ultimately would have been responsible for the final shape of Iraq, and would have had to station troops all over the country to guard what it had wrought. Rather than Vietnam, some argue, this would have been like Israel's effort to reshape Lebanon—which Israel abandoned under terrorist pressure.

What's more, top officials say, the ambiguity of the warnings about Iraqi use of helicopters was deliberate.

It was designed to reinforce strong secret warnings that the United States would not stand for Saddam's use of poison gas against his population and would shoot down helicopters if they were used in chemical attacks. Since chemicals were not used, administration officials bizarrely claim their policy was successful, even though Saddam was allowed to use choppers to strafe rebels.

Reinforcing Bradley's point about a closed policy process, though, some administration officials say that Bush never heard from White House and Pentagon subordinates who felt strongly that Saddam's helicopters should have been shot down (as fixed-wing aircraft were) as a humanitarian action, even if the administration did not intend to go after tanks and artillery. The helicopter issue was decided in a March 26 meeting of top officials reportedly dominated by General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who opposed any involvement in the civil war and argued that massive use of U.S. air power would be needed to suppress all helicopter flights in Iraq, and that some U.S. planes likely would be shot down. Only Vice President Dan Quayle raised any questions about the morality of abandoning the rebels, but he did not press the point. Officials not invited to the meeting reportedly felt that shooting down just a few helicopters might even have led to the administration's wished-for coup against Saddam.

Finally, top administration officials are furious with outside critics who accuse Bush of callousness to the plight of the refugees. They say he privately agonized at TV pictures of their suffering, and that on April 5 he ordered massive air drops to commence two days later. When that proved insufficient, he reversed his policy against using American forces to provide safe haven for the refugees and declared that U.S. troops will keep protecting them until an international force is assembled to take over. And, officials say, the United States did pre-position equipment for a refugee crisis in Iraq after the war, although on the Jordanian border, not the Turkish. Since Saddam's 1988 use of chemical weapons against the Kurds produced only 80,000 refugees, they ask, how could they have anticipated 2 million?

The administration's main defense, in other words, is that it was "taken by surprise" by the civil war, by Saddam's devastating response, and by the massive refugee crisis, and that it responded as quickly as it could to unforeseen events. But this assertion is contradicted by the insistence of other officials who contend that the CIA provided many early warnings of the disasters to come.

Who's right? It's hard to tell, with the variety of stories coming out of the administration. What is clear is that something went badly wrong—bad intelligence, bad policy, or bad management. Perhaps the administration had good information and made horrible policy choices. Or perhaps its information wasn't so good. Either way there needs to be an investigation by Congress and a full accounting to the public. ●

Why parochial schools beat public ones.

OUT-CLASSSED

By Abigail Thernstrom

The president wants 535 experimental "New American Schools," at a start-up cost of \$1 million each. We need "nontraditional" designs, the president says. Perhaps. But for many "at-risk" urban students, at least one familiar model of schooling already works: inner-city Catholic schools, which are themselves "at risk." They are hard up for funds, their enrollments are declining, and some are closing down. And that's bad news, for many are educating disadvantaged urban kids with remarkable success.

The success of Catholic schools comes easy, it is often said. The parochial schools can pick and choose among their applicants, and—more important—the schools themselves are chosen by parents. The students aren't assigned; their families apply, and that application is a crucial sign of commitment to education. These families *care*. Too often education is a no-show show. Neither the parents nor the students regularly appear. The parochial schools are blessed, however. They have a devoted clientele.

The point is at best a half-truth. It's not at all clear that selection and self-selection explain the success of urban Catholic schools. In fact, one New York City program—the Student/Sponsor Partnership—has been effectively testing the theory, with illuminating results. S/SP rescues often-floundering eighth grade students from the New York City public school system and places them, with private funds, in Catholic high schools. The funds are provided by a "sponsor" who agrees to pay tuition and pay attention. The tuition runs around \$2,000 a year for the four years, and the attention means movies, museums, help on homework, securing summer jobs—or just keeping in touch. Sponsors with limited funds or limited time give what they can.

Most of the students who participate in the S/SP don't come from families that have sought a superior education for their children. And of the students who entered the program last fall, 82 percent are living with one parent or none; 53 percent of the families are on welfare and none has an income above the poverty level. Most of these participants differ from the average New York City public school student in only one respect: someone has noticed them. Someone from the Children's Aid Society, for instance, has spotted their need and concluded there is hope. Not because they are academically gifted; the obviously gifted need not apply to this particular program.

New York's Catholic high schools report a 95 percent on-time graduation rate for all their students. Eighty percent go on to postsecondary education. Remarkably, the picture is little different for the S/SP students. The program loses about 17 percent of its participants, but more than 80 percent stay in school and go on to college. Moreover, the small minority that directly enters the work force has acquired the basic skills and personal discipline to do so.

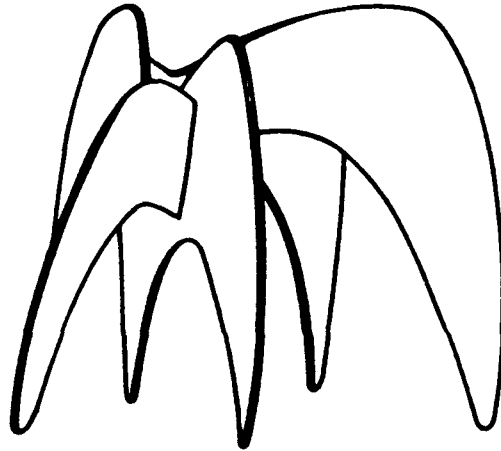
Of course 488 students in fifteen schools provide a limited picture. But the S/SP experience is confirmed by a wealth of data, analyzed in the 1980s by the distinguished sociologist James S. Coleman, a scholar who has been telling the educational truth for three decades. Looking specifically at "at risk" students, Coleman found that the "Catholic sector effect" is real: the "disadvantaged" student is not academically disadvantaged in a Catholic school environment. Single-parent black or Hispanic students will learn more math and acquire better verbal skills in a Catholic school than they will in either public or private schools. The Catholic schools do what the public schools are supposed to: equalize educational opportunity. They greatly narrow the gap in performance between the haves and have-nots.

Why the success? The Catholic schools' values are those of the community they serve, Coleman argues. Most public schools are not based in any real community; modern life severs the old connections that propinquity used to create. But the families who use the Catholic schools are linked by social relations, intergenerational closeness, and a consensus on norms that sustains the authority of the schools themselves.

Coleman's point tells only part of the story. The S/SP and other students for whom the Catholic schools work don't necessarily belong to any closely linked community. (Approximately a third of the families are not even Catholic, and most won't know one another.) The schools must be doing something right. And indeed, students and staff at several that I visited argue that they are.

They point, first, to a sense of school unity. The principal hires the staff and chooses people who endorse the school's ideals. Those in authority thus speak with one voice. They share both an educational outlook and an extraordinary commitment to the students. Teaching is not a job, they say; it's a calling. Teachers have a mission: to do good. That outlook creates a special atmosphere. The teachers get to know every student. The school becomes family. "When I didn't show up in public school, almost nothing would happen," one student explained. "Here the teachers care."

The school functions as a family in another sense: it's a safe haven, an orderly world. Some students spoke of the sense of security that came from wearing a uniform. Others welcomed the strict rules about fights—grounds for expulsion. As one student put it, "Public school teachers are scared of the students; you can't act like an animal around here." In one school that I visited, rude talk to teachers means demerits, and three demerits



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means detention. Students are also detained to compensate for unexplained hours of absence from the school. Moreover, truancy means a call to a parent, who must come in to the school with the student. The rules are both clear and strictly enforced.

The schools have the trust of the attentive parents, and undoubtedly that trust allows the schools to set standards. But the trust of the students is more important. The teachers love and push them—tell them they're special and give them a D. Getting an A takes work. "In my public school if I came to class, I passed," one student noted. "Here it's different." It's different in two senses: one, the standards are high, but two, the pedagogy isn't very imaginative. Students learn basic stuff. And in the end they know it.

Learning the basic stuff means a few-frills, demanding curriculum—for instance, four years of English and history, and three years of math and science. An English course might include a collection of *New Yorker* stories, but the contrast with the offerings at, say, the public high school in Brookline, Massachusetts, is stark. Students there may take a senior seminar titled "The Mind's Eye" for either English or math credit. It grapples with questions such as: "How is physics like a fairy tale, and does it have a happy ending?" "Does Michael Jordan know more than Albert Einstein ever did?" Another Brookline course that simultaneously fulfills the social studies and sophomore biology requirements studies "the mind of a voodoo doctor" and other such matters.

The demands upon the Catholic school students extend to their relations with others and their spiritual growth. The moral seriousness of these schools stemming from their religious commitment makes them willing to dwell on such values as respect, self-respect, and responsibility—topics they touch upon in every class. "We aim to create competent, decent, loving human beings," one teacher explained. Of course they teach religion, but they don't pressure non-Catholics to convert. Indeed, students belonging to Western and non-Western faiths share their religious life. "They don't convert, but they do come out thinking about what's right and wrong," the executive director of S/SP noted.

These Catholic schools provide no bilingual education—despite their significant Hispanic population; the Spanish-speaking students learn English in the regular classrooms. They don't fret about black teachers for black students; role models come in all colors. And they don't hesitate to separate fast from slow learners. But kids in different tracks learn basically the same material—at a different pace.

For a fraction of the cost, the urban Catholic schools dramatically outperform most of their public counterparts. Should we transfer every willing inner-city student for whom there is room into a parochial school? Perhaps, but the students who participate in the S/SP are the beneficiaries of the kindness of strangers, and the kindness of strangers can't rescue the entire urban school population. Already the S/SP has a hard time finding a sufficient number of sponsors. The alterna-

tive to private money is of course publicly funded vouchers. But they pose problems too. They would allow consumer-driven education—schools in which anything goes, as long as parents will buy it.

The real alternative may be a remodeling job: reshaping urban public schools to resemble those that the archdiocese runs. It can't be done whole hog. And it won't work for all kids. But a couple of New American Schools may be a good place to start.

How much can be transferred from the parochial to the public school setting? Quite a bit, a recent RAND Corporation study of Catholic and other special schools in New York has argued. As good public schools understand, they too can have clear and uncomplicated missions defined by a staff truly in charge. They too can institute a stripped-down, meat-and-potatoes curriculum, and then insist the students do the work. Discipline need not be haphazard. Teachers can be attentive and caring, yet consistent and firm. And while the public schools can't teach religion, they can talk more about right and wrong.

The RAND research, that of Coleman, and the experience of S/SP all point in the same direction: good schools have old-fashioned virtues. Bush's research teams will be on a frantic search for the mysterious key to quality schooling for the severely disadvantaged. In fact, there may be no mystery. High standards, high expectations, a disciplined and caring environment, a willingness to talk about such basic values as civility and honesty and family commitment: it's an old-fangled strategy but it just might work.

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A report on the Kurds in Iran.

THE OTHER HELL

By Michael Kelly

SARDASHT, IRAN

In war there are winners and losers, and then there are the truly screwed. Meet Majid Abdullah. He is 30 years old, and up until a month or so ago he was a soldier in the Iraqi army. When the ground war started in Kuwait, he ran away from a fight he wanted no part of anyway, and made his way back to his home in Kirkuk, a city in the Kurdish north. Soon after he arrived, his neighbors, Kurds like himself, decided to seize the moment against their old enemy, Saddam. Abdullah says they had an idea, based on listening to George Bush, that

the United States might lend a hand. This proved fatally false, and in no time Saddam's helicopters, Abdullah recalls, "were killing, killing, killing—killing people in the streets."

Abdullah ran again, this time with about a million and a half of his fellow Kurds, to the sanctuary of Iran. And this is where he is now, on a late April afternoon, standing shivering and sockless in the mud on a hilltop in a refugee camp that looks like a place for prisoners of war, where a meal of a few potatoes and water and a little bread is daily fare, where the weak and the sick are dying at a slow but steady clip, and where, it turns out, he and his kind are not welcome at all.

The Kurds who fled Iraq's butchery for Iran's mercy have escaped hell to land in purgatory. Their brethren who fled to Turkey are, relatively speaking, the lucky ones. America has promised them protection, decent camps are being built, the Marines are watching over them.

Sorrow does have its gradations. The saddest place I came across in the hundreds of miles of western Iran over which the refugees have been scattered was the camp of lost children. This place, located just outside of the farm market city of Saqqez, in the province of Kurdistan, was set up by the Iranian government to care for the thousands of Iraqi Kurdish girls and boys who have lost their mothers or their fathers or both. Some of them saw their parents gunned down by helicopters. Others misplaced them in the terrible exodus through the snowy mountain passes to Iran. Now they live here—infants, toddlers, and teens, together with aunts and occasional uncles: 5,000 thoroughly wretched souls. In happier times the camp was a farm, and it must have been a fine and pleasant place, situated as it is in a lovely green and broad plateau ringed by gently rounded hills and old, soft mountains. Now it is guarded by armed soldiers and surrounded by metal fences and shining, slice-to-the-bone new rolls of concertina wire. The first thing I saw there was a pretty little girl, maybe four years old, sitting alone at the front gate against a big roll of the razor-edged steel, smiling in the afternoon sun.

In the old bucolic days the concrete and corrugated tin barns held beasts. Now they hold humans treated like beasts. Each building has been divided into pens, with sheets of tin tied together with twine. The pens fill the barns and the people fill the pens. I counted twenty-three in one ten- by twenty-foot square. The refugees sleep in the pens, on worn and dirty blankets on the concrete floor; the children play in them; the women cook in them, on crude kerosene stoves that are tipsy on the uneven floor. The sick lie still, staring or sleeping, and the others fit themselves around them, in a squalid, squirming zigzag. Rain leaks through the roof and through the windows and doors that are covered only with plastic

sheets. The air is fetid and close, rich with the stink of sweat and kerosene and the shit that is everywhere, and that peculiar smell of apple-sweet rottenness that emanates from the lungs and pores of the gravely ill.

I walked, with another reporter, through the beast-homes. A refugee and mechanical engineer named Barham Abbas pointed out one hollow-cheeked woman lying curled on the floor in a fetal position, with two young children lying next to her. He said, "You see her? You see these children? They have had diarrhea for twelve days. They are going to die." The people swarmed, shouting for attention, each one trying to tell what horrified him or her the most. "Mister, mister! There are no showers. . . . Mister, mister! We have no freedom to leave. Mister, mister! This is a place for cows and chickens. . . . Mister, mister! There is no food. . . . We are sick. . . . The water is bad. . . ." Very soon after we arrived in the camp, the Iranian official accompanying us decided this was not a fit sight for the foreign press. "Come," he said, pushing and prodding. "Enough. Must leave now." The soldiers escorted us out and shut the gate.

Lesser horrors greeted the eye everywhere. The dirt roads and green pastures leading from the mountain passes were thronged with dirty, tired, hungry people. On a path thirty miles north of this western Iranian city, thousands camped in rough tents made from tree branches and plastic sheeting. On a warm afternoon the women washed clothes against the rocks in a brook swollen by spring melt. The dirt road was a bizarre bazaar, the result of private enterprise rushing in to supply food and goods that the government and the relief agencies had not. Small boys walked down the road tempting the hungry with boxes of pastries and cookies and hard-boiled eggs (a pinch of salt included). A stand of aluminum tent poles stood next to a shish kebab brazier that was bordered by a display of lady's plastic pumps. To pay for such goods, the refugees had opened a medieval trading route, carrying on foot from Iraq into Iran anything of value they could take from their home. Every ten or fifteen minutes, another importer would come trudging down the road from the mountains. One old man, perhaps five foot three inches tall and weighing maybe 130 pounds, was bent double from the refrigerator strapped to his back. Another labored under a load of four large television sets, still in their cardboard factory boxes. The men said they had walked six or seven miles with their loads.

In the towns and small cities near the border, the wandering homeless overwhelmed the streets, searching for food, resting by small fires along the sides of the road, joining roosters and hens and just sitting and scratching in the dirt. Here the only care seemed often to come from the local Iranian Kurds. "We get nothing from government," said Muhammed Kidur, standing on a street corner in Sardasht. "No medicine, no food.

We haven't seen meat, we haven't seen bread, we haven't seen anything. We are not even allowed to go to the market to buy food." Others rushed around, a cacophony of complaints, but the Iranian media-minder hurried a few policemen over to shoo the witnesses away.

It is not that no one was trying to care for the refugees. By the second week of the crisis, the large foreign relief agencies—principally the International Committee of the Red Cross and the French group Médecins Sans Frontières—had done much good. But they were nowhere close to coping with the scope of the problem. No one knew the basics: how many refugees were still arriving, where they were going, how many camps had sprung up and where they were located, how many people were dying, and from what. I talked one afternoon with the Red Cross's chief delegate in the refugee-swamped province of Azerbaijan. I mentioned the fact that in at least some of the Iranian government-run camps, refugees were guarded by soldiers who seemed to treat them as prisoners. He demurred. "In the camps I have been in, I have seen them come and go as they please." It turned out he had not been to any camps except the one operated by his own agency, and one or two others. "I don't really have the time."

What the international relief workers did know was enough to make them gloomily sure that things were going to get worse. In the only camps where medical teams had made a complete survey, the mortality rate among children was found to be four times the level considered "acceptable": two deaths per 10,000 people per day. "The rate should stay the same for the next week or so, but because of food supplies being insufficient, it should rise after that," said Dr. Bitar Dounia, the Médecins Sans Frontières epidemiologist who analyzed the survey results. "To what extent it will rise, I have no idea."

The insufficiency of food is the heart of the problem. Foreign relief supplies, arriving in the regional capitals of western Iran, mostly by cargo planes, are not enough. By the third week of this crisis, an estimated 150 planes had landed, bringing 500 tons of food, blankets, medicine, and other supplies. But, said Pierre Sarant, chief field administrator in Azerbaijan for Médecins Sans Frontières, "This is not going to work. There are 500,000 refugees here. Under these circumstances, 500 tons is nothing. It is rain in the desert."

Which brings the issue back to the Iranian government, whose resources in manpower and at least such basics as bread dwarfed that which the foreign relief agencies can bring to bear. From the beginning of the flood, the government, first in the form of the wholly controlled Iranian Red Crescent and then through the Interior Ministry, has insisted on handling all food distribution. Privately, Red Cross and other foreign relief workers complained that the government's role seems

to have focused on maintaining bureaucratic protocols and stockpiling food, rather than speeding it to the often remote refugee camps and border areas.

The Iranian government has contended that a modest Third World nation cannot be expected to do any better caring for such multitudes of guests. But a number of the international relief experts working with the Iranians said they did not believe a paucity of resources was the real reason why, for instance, the children in the Saqqez camp were being fed nothing but potatoes and bread, why they were being given drugs that had expired as long ago as 1964, why they had only eleven toilets for 5,000 people.

"The real truth," said an angry Red Cross official, "is they don't want these people here. They only want to give them just enough to survive and make them get the hell out of town and the hell out of the country."

Which is why Majid Abdullah, sockless in the mud of Sardasht, is truly screwed. Because if you are an Iraqi Kurd in Iran, it may be some time before you can go home again.

MICHAEL KELLY is a TNR special correspondent.

The cult of Kent State.

TRIGGER HAPPY

By Francis Wilkinson

At midnight on May 3 a candlelight procession will wind its way around the Kent State campus, coming to a halt at a parking lot adjacent to the university's Prentice Hall. There, for the next twelve hours, rotating teams of sentinels will stand in the places where four students were killed by Ohio National Guardsmen on May 4, 1970, at 12:24 p.m.

The annual parking lot vigil is orchestrated by the May 4 Task Force, a student group, and is just one of numerous commemorations of the Kent State massacre sponsored by the university to promote "awareness" of the event on campus. The May 4 Resource Center contains memorabilia, research material, and four stained-glass windows that depict the shootings "using a sunburst gradually growing smaller as the size of the bullet holes intensifies." There is also the library's Memorial Room, a sociology/political science course on "May 4th and its Aftermath," and four permanent scholarships named for the dead. The Center for Peaceful Change, an academic program, offers courses on non-violent dispute resolution. Near the site there are a couple of memorial sculptures, a marble and granite marker, 58,000 daffodils, and, of course, the May 4 Me-

memorial itself, a \$200,000 monument paid for by private contributions and dedicated last year on the twentieth anniversary of the shootings.

The university appears not only to have reconciled itself with its peculiar history, but to have done so profitably. For a decade Kent State declined to discuss the tragedy, but with the arrival of President Michael Schwartz, who presided from 1982 to 1990, those qualms were soon dispersed. Commemorations were encouraged and plans initiated for the May 4 Memorial. Enrollment, which had declined during the fifteen years following the shootings, gradually crept up to its current, record high of 22,000. The school now prominently features May 4 in a full page of its annual course catalog. Last year it brought George McGovern, William Kunstler, and other luminaries from the '70s to campus for the twentieth anniversary, which it publicized with a two-pound press kit full of historical background on the killings and detailed explanations of memorial rituals and events. It even helpfully provided a map marked with Xs for the dead and asterisks for the wounded.

The university is not alone in making extensive use of the event. A kind of cult persists around the shootings, comprising former student activists for whom the tragedy became not just a defining moment, but also a lens through which forever to view the world. The Kent May 4 Center, an amorphous organization unaffiliated with the university, is the primary exponent of this thinking. "We do education about the murder cover-up and other things, trying to prevent another Kent State-style massacre," says Alan Canfora, the center's 42-year-old director. "I try to raise awareness on campus."

The tragedy may have marked the close of an era for the nation, but for Canfora it was the beginning of a career. A Kent State graduate with a master's degree in library science, Canfora was one of two or three thousand students on campus protesting the invasion of Cambodia when Ohio National Guardsmen opened fire, killing four and wounding nine. A guardsman's bullet sailed through Canfora's wrist, sparing serious injury but bestowing lasting notoriety. For the past fourteen years he has earned his living by spreading his gospel on the campus lecture circuit.

Canfora founded the not-for-profit center with friends two years ago and runs it out of an office in his parents' home in Barberton, Ohio. Canfora points out that he works voluntarily for the center, which he says is funded by a growing core of more than 100 contributors from around the country. He is currently preparing proposals for grants to finance, among other projects, the purchase of permanent quarters. One of the goals of the organization is to build its own May 4 memorial off campus in the town of Kent. The university's efforts to commemorate the killings, Canfora complains, have been grossly inadequate. Particularly "provocative," he notes, was the school's decision to scale down drastically the original plans for the campus memorial.

The president of the center's five-member board is

Roseann Canfora-Knepp, Alan's sister, whose own relationship to May 4 was sealed with only slightly less terror than her brother's. "She was in the parking lot hiding behind a car," Canfora says. "A bullet shattered a car window." Like her brother, Roseann came away with a trophy of the moment. "She had shards of glass in her hair," says her proud sibling. The board's vice president, whom Canfora describes as "kind of a scholar," was nowhere near the campus on May 4 but has lived its most trenchant scene vicariously, playing the role of murdered Kent student Allison Krause in a North Carolina production of a play called *Kent State: A Wake* in the late '70s. Another board member is said to have been an "eyewitness" to the shooting.

Canfora, who calls the massacre an "unsolved crime," is the group's guru and main media attraction. In the weeks surrounding last year's twentieth anniversary, Canfora appeared on CNN's "Crossfire" and gave, he says, "sometimes twenty radio interviews a day." Years of addressing ingenuous sophomores and college newspaper reporters, however, have taken a toll; his standard pitch is a jumble of reflexive slogans and sound bite non sequiturs. "We're concerned that Americans still have not learned the lessons of Kent State," Canfora told me with practiced urgency. When I asked what those lessons were, he replied, "I think the lesson is the American people will not tolerate a Kent State-style massacre."

Although the specific Kent State "style" of bloodshed has not been much in evidence over the past twenty years, Canfora has managed to improvise, transforming Kent State into an archetype for diverse student deaths as far away as Mali, Romania, South Africa, and Tiananmen Square. "There are still many examples of these kinds of Kent State massacres that occur around the world," he says. But the applications of Kent State are broader still, encompassing abuse of power on any scale, anywhere. "I think another case recently was where the Los Angeles Police Department beat that African-American fellow out there," he says.

The Gulf war, so ripe with the promise of slogans and speaking fees, held out hope for renewed meaning and purpose. "My fear was that polarization could lead to another incident," Canfora says. "There were times when it was very, very tense." Canfora garnered three speaking engagements at the University of Pittsburgh alone. Filmed at a clash of pro- and anti-war demonstrators on the Kent State campus in February, he scored a major sound bite on CNN.

But the Gulf war and its resultant discord ended quickly, and Canfora is back on the minor-league circuit, scheduled to speak this month at Northern Virginia Community College. When I first contacted him, Canfora made no secret of his desire to be the subject of a profile. "I could use the publicity," he said. There are still four years to go until the twenty-fifth anniversary.

FRANCIS WILKINSON is a writer living in New York.

OFF BASE

By Fred Barnes

Representative Patricia Schroeder, Democrat of Colorado, is probably the most forceful and unrelenting critic of military spending in the House of Representatives. In 1989 she voted to slash \$56 billion from the Pentagon budget, a reduction of roughly 20 percent. In 1990 she said \$70 billion should be cut, half going for the deficit, half for education. She was unhappy with last October's budget deal because defense spending was cut only 3 percent annually (for five years). She was pleased, though, with Defense Secretary Dick Cheney's proposal last year to close thirty-five military bases, including sixteen major ones. "We all know that America's military will be substantially smaller in the years ahead," she said. "A smaller force means fewer bases."

This April Schroeder lost some of her zeal for shrinking the military. The reason: Cheney proposed a new round of thirty-one base closings, including Lowry Air Force Base in her Denver district. In a written statement she vowed to scour the proposal to find "anything wrong or questionable" in the rationale for shutting Lowry. And she said she expects to find flaws. She told *The Rocky Mountain News* that the criteria laid down by Congress for closing bases are "flaky." She declared it "fairly shocking" that Cheney ignored the 1988 finding of a base closing commission and the General Accounting Office that Lowry should stay open.

Base closings bring out the worst in Congress. Schroeder's flip-flop is an example, but she's not one of the biggest offenders. Members of Congress will go to extraordinary lengths to protect a threatened base in their state or district. In 1977 then Representative William Cohen, Republican of Maine, authored a bill that made base closings all but impossible. It required an environmental impact statement, plus studies of the economic results, and allowed court challenges and congressional disapproval. Cohen, now a senator, was eager to save Loring Air Force Base in rural Maine, which the Pentagon said was obsolete. He succeeded not only in protecting Loring but in preventing the Pentagon from closing any major base for eleven years, scores of which have been obsolete since World War II, some since the Indian wars a century ago.

Though devoted to cutting military spending, Representative Barbara Boxer, Democrat of California, fought the closing of the Presidio of San Francisco, the Army's equivalent of a country club. She got Democratic Representative John Murtha of Pennsylvania, the

chairman of the defense appropriations subcommittee, to allow a special amendment sparing the Presidio in 1988. But her effort generated bad publicity and she backed off. The Presidio will soon close.

This year Senator Fritz Hollings, Democrat of South Carolina, takes the hypocrisy prize. Normally a hawk, he vehemently opposed going to war against Iraq. Bush "cannot win his long-term objectives in the Persian Gulf by waging war," he insisted. On January 4 he said, "Anybody who believes that a majority of Americans are ready to send their sons to the Gulf is whistling Dixie." But four months later, when Cheney advocated closing Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, Hollings caught the war spirit. "Myrtle Beach's A-10 Warthogs won the Gulf war," he said. The 354th Tactical Fighter Wing from Myrtle Beach "did such a thorough job of destroying Saddam's tanks that when the ground war started we went forward with 2,000 U.S. tanks and didn't lose a single one." Hollings declared that in shutting Myrtle Beach, Cheney is as big an ingrate as the British who voted Winston Churchill out of office after he won World War II. Of course, Warthogs from other bases performed as well in the war as those from Myrtle Beach. Hollings didn't mention that. And Cheney's plan would assign the Myrtle Beach warplanes to other bases (or retire the aging ones). Hollings didn't mention that either.

Senator Arlen Specter, Republican of Pennsylvania, also exploited the war in a bid to save the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, for years a Pentagon target for closure. "The shipyard has extended the life of carriers which were invaluable in the Gulf war," Specter contended. More important was another tack, common to base closing fights, used to keep the shipyard open. Supporters simply appropriated money for work at the shipyard. The Navy had asked for about \$500 million for a routine overhaul of the USS *Kennedy*, an aircraft carrier, somewhere on the East Coast. Congress responded by putting \$1.2 billion in the "dire emergency" supplemental appropriation this year for a "service life extension program" for the *Kennedy*, stipulating the work be done at Philadelphia. This approach was used to keep Fort Dix, New Jersey, alive in the 1970s and 1980s (it was mothballed in 1988). Cohen got \$200 million for modernization at Loring. And so on.

Not everyone in Congress is parochial on base closings. In 1987 Representative Richard Armey, Republican of Texas, won passage of a bill setting up a base closing commission. Its recommendations—eighty-six base closings or "realignments"—were approved by Congress in 1988. Cheney, as part of his scheme for downsizing the military, proposed more closings in 1990, but Congress balked. Democrats claimed their districts were being singled out. Representative Bob Wise, Democrat of West Virginia, claimed, against the evidence, that 91 percent of the bases and 99 percent of the civilian job losses were in Democratic districts. Congress proposed instead a procedure for base closings in 1991, 1993, and 1995 that goes something like this: First, Cheney proposes a list of closings; then the eight-member Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission considers and maybe

modifies the list. Then the commission sends a list to Bush, who either rejects it or sends the full list to Congress, which votes up or down on the entire package.

Cheney has a powerful argument for closures. His budget is dwindling, and he created a new force structure to adapt to the post-cold war environment. Active-duty service personnel will decrease from 2 million to 1.5 million by 1995, the Army's eighteen divisions will be cut to twelve, the Navy's ships will be trimmed from 545 to 451, and the Air Force will lose nine active wings. "If we keep all the bases open and have a smaller force, we will end up wasting resources, spending resources to keep bases alive, instead of spending money to maintain a quality force," he said. That produces what he calls "a hollow force," low in combat readiness, and "a hollow force gives you Desert One instead of Desert Storm." The service branches selected the bases for closing, said Cheney. "We're extremely careful to make certain that there has been no political spin." Sixty percent of the bases are in Democratic districts. Democrats hold 61 percent of House seats.

Armey, the champion of base closings, got nicked this time. Cheney's list included Carswell Air Force Base, just outside Armey's district. Many Armey constituents work there, and 20,000 military retirees in his district use its facilities. He hasn't squawked. "Every congressman is an expert on the value of a base to himself and his constituents," Armey told me. "They cannot judge its strategic value to the country's defense." Nevertheless, he believes it is proper for others to challenge Cheney's decision on the basis of the nine official criteria for base closings. But he declined to join a Texas delegation that went to lobby Cheney in April, because it planned to play up the fact that Mayor Bob Bolen of Fort Worth headed Mayors for Bush in 1988. "I didn't feel comfortable with that," he said. Many in Congress aren't so squeamish. ●

In defense of Nancy.

THE MOMMY TRACK

By Sidney Blumenthal

"Barbaric queen, adulterous wife, woman without morals." These epithets of sexual demonology are not to be found in Kitty Kelley's *Nancy Reagan*, but in the *Essai historique sur la vie de Marie Antoinette*, the anonymously authored best seller of the prerevolutionary 1780s in France. But Nancy was attracted to the royal aura of the woman who had stood in the tumbril accused of debaucheries both sexual and governmental. In 1969, a year after Ronald Reagan's first presidential feint,

Nancy arranged to be privately guided through Versailles, an extravagant set larger than the Warner Bros. backlot, where she had a ghostly vision of the last of the Bourbons. "I could see them," she remarked.

It was natural that Nancy, who aspired to a queenly estate, would be instinctively drawn to the ghost of Marie Antoinette. But their stories finished with a critical difference. The soiled reputation of Marie Antoinette helped bring about the overthrow of the monarchy, though little of the innuendo about her was true. By contrast, almost all the insinuations about Nancy's vanities were on the mark, but did not lead to the fall of the House of Reagan. Instead, her intrusions in the privy councils were essential in rescuing the faltering ruler from the consequences of his foolishness. Without the statecraft of the dominatrix, Reagan's presidency probably would have been doomed to disgrace.

Ronald Reagan's conversion to conservatism, the first step in his political career, is partly attributable to the influence of his second wife. He had been an outspoken liberal in Hollywood but was deeply shaken from his moorings by his divorce. Nancy helped give shape to his initially inchoate conservatism, and Ronnie looked upon her stepfather, Dr. Loyal Davis, a far-right-winger, as a political mentor. (He even made a record denouncing Medicaid at Dr. Davis's prompting.) In 1959, when Nikita Khrushchev visited the 20th Century-Fox studios, where he was greeted by more than 400 stars, the Reagans, by then stalwarts of the small right-wing circle in Hollywood, pointedly boycotted. Yet Nancy eventually would become the betrayer that always haunted the movement: the enemy within. The conservative movement that marked the cold war's onset by demonizing Alger Hiss was undone at its end by Nancy Reagan. Her apostasy was ultimately justified by the redemption of her husband. She had to destroy the conservatives in order to save him.

"She was always protecting him from those who wanted him to be strident," says Michael Deaver, who was the keeper of Reagan's image during the first term and Nancy's closest confidant in the White House. But Nancy, who was politically shrewder, subtler, and tougher than her husband, did not always get her way. Her low opinions of James Watt, William Casey, and Caspar Weinberger were discounted, and they were all appointed; the results were embarrassment, scandal, and insolvency. According to Deaver's memoir, *Behind the Scenes*, Nancy opposed the spendthrift military buildup at the expense of social programs; favored a negotiated settlement in Nicaragua; and opposed the president's "dream" of Star Wars and his trip to the Nazi cemetery at Bitburg. Still, he acted against her wishes. Throughout Reagan's first term Nancy tried every means to turn him away from vociferous support of the social agenda of the New Right. She made sure that when the annual anti-

abortion rally was held across from the White House, the president put in an appearance only via telephone. Nancy—working with the James Baker-Michael Deaver White House team and the Republican Senate leadership—succeeded in confining the New Right social issues mainly to the rhetorical realm, thereby preventing the Reagan coalition from being split apart in the 1984 campaign.

But what most concerned the fretful Nancy was the deteriorating state of U.S.-Soviet relations. When Reagan called the Soviet Union an “evil empire” in a heated polemic before a gathering of the religious right, Nancy “tried persuading me to lower the temperature of my rhetoric,” Reagan writes in his autobiography. The phrase was never used again. “Usually,” Deaver told me last week, “Nancy would spring into action on the defense, when her husband got into trouble. But the Soviet issue wasn’t that sort of deal. It was not a reaction. She really felt it was important for his presidency from the beginning.” When Alexander Haig was forced out as secretary of state, partly at her instigation, and replaced by George Shultz, “she was on the phone and trying to do everything she could,” says Deaver. Just before the 1984 election Nancy got the president to invite Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet foreign minister, to the White House. “You whisper ‘peace’ into his ear every night,” he told her. “Oh, I will,” she replied. “And I’ll also whisper ‘peace’ in your ear.”

But of course Mommy saved Ronnie through more powerful forces than her pillow talk. In swift order Mikhail Gorbachev arose as the Soviet leader and Reagan fell into the mire of the Iran-contra scandal. Only by signing an arms control agreement, an act that conservatives within his administration had so far managed to frustrate, would Reagan restore the luster of his presidency. All along Nancy was there to encourage his diplomacy and elbow the right to the sidelines. In the process Reagan was ending the cold war, his greatest achievement. There can be little question that she was indispensable to it. “Nancy is determined I will go down in history as the President of Peace,” Reagan confided to then Speaker of the House Jim Wright.

“She considered virtually all conservative ideas as a liability,” Paul Weyrich, one of the most important New Right leaders, told me. “She operated at the level of imagery, but with policy objectives. She would intervene and say, ‘You shouldn’t do this, your image will be affected.’” Conservatism, it seems, had not had a fair chance. “Without her intervention or Deaver’s,” complains Weyrich, “the Reagan presidency would have been 30 or 40 percent more conservative than it turned out.” Weyrich himself felt the sting of rejection. One of the movement conservatives who worked in the White House, he says, “told me that five times my name was on the list to attend state dinners—and five times it was scratched out by Nancy or Deaver.” Conservatism was off the A-list for a worse sin than

being a political drag; it was, in Nancy’s eyes, hopelessly unfashionable.

The fundamental unresolved tension within the Reagans themselves was between fashion and Hollywood values on the one hand and conservative ideology on the other. When Reagan first came to power the new money adored him for his shameless celebration of conspicuous consumption; even many in the old establishment were thrilled by his unabashed right-wing rhetoric, which was like the confident gunning of a big engine. The cultural traces of the 1960s and 1970s were in retreat. For a moment, conservatism appeared glamorous, draped with a mink coat. But when the ideology turned into vintage clothing almost overnight, Nancy shoved it to the back of the closet.

The problem for any president is isolation, but it was exaggerated in the case of Reagan. Nancy served as his link to society. And her link was through her retinue of interior decorators, clothing designers, and bachelor walkers. But the world of fashion she occupied should not be disparaged as irrelevant. Fashion is a bellwether that demands prescience from its practitioners—unlike political polling, which specializes in revealing the moment that has just ended. Fashion is preoccupied with the future, the next season’s line. Far from being a trivial force, fashion proved more potent—and necessary—than conservatism.

At the crisis of the Reagan presidency, the contradictions gaped open. “Mistakes,” as Vice President Bush put it, “were made”—i.e., missiles to the Ayatollah. With Ronnie in disrepute, Nancy had to sever him from the cold war, which was like a film whose last frame had run out and was flapping on the reel. She no longer had any use for what she is reported to have called “jump-off-the-cliff-with-the-flag-flying conservatism.” The secret behind her adoring “gaze” had always been that she provided her passive husband with the will to power that had not been evident in him before he met her. Now Nancy offered the clairvoyance for which he ultimately got the credit. But all along Jerry Zipkin, her Manhattan social escort, and the other creatures of fashion—in addition to George Shultz—had been cluing her in.

As a historical matter, it now appears that Nancy paid far more serious attention to the political opinions of Zipkin and the dovish crowd at Le Cirque than to her Washington escort, George Will. The conservative columnist’s influence was finally undermined by his dogmatism, especially against the arms treaty. In the end, laments Weyrich, conservatives were routed by “the beautiful people.”

Conservatism could never have come to power without the Hollywood candidate; since his political debut, the movement’s hopes had depended upon the magnetism of Reagan’s personality. He gave the right not only its best chance at power but its only one. When the plot got so complicated that the half-deaf monarch lost his much celebrated vision and stumbled back and forth across the screen, his queen directed

him to a happy ending fit for Hollywood royalty. The judgment of history—the critics—had acquired for her a supreme status. And Reagan's drastic loss of box-office appeal made him more susceptible than ever to Nancy's pleadings. His need for approval dovetailed with his puerile, utopian streak. It was not difficult to

write new scenes into the script, after all. Better than anyone, Nancy understood the role in which he was most comfortable. At last, as the supporting actor to Gorbachev—the oldest Reagan role, the best friend—the president remained true to her and his Hollywood values. Hooray for Hollywood! ●

Industrial policy reconsidered.

UP THE WORKERS

By Robert B. Reich

A New Economic Order is emerging with less fanfare than George Bush's New World Order and with consequences tending in the opposite direction. Even as America reasserts itself militarily, American corporations are quietly abandoning America. Consider: over the last three years American firms' capital investments abroad grew by more than 20 percent, while their domestic investments grew by less than 7 percent. Meanwhile their overseas R&D mushroomed more than 30 percent, but R&D at home grew by less than 6 percent. The competitiveness of American corporations has less and less to do with the competitiveness of America.

Foreign operations of American-owned firms now account for more than \$1 trillion in sales per year—roughly four times the total export of goods made in the United States, and about seven to eight times the value of the nation's recent trade deficits. In fact, America's trade deficit would turn into a surplus if the foreign sales of American-owned firms were added, and the American sales of foreign firms were subtracted. Even venerable corporate headquarters are heading abroad: a few months ago IBM announced that it was transferring to France the headquarters of its \$10 billion per year communications business, following last summer's decision by Hewlett-Packard to shift its personal computer division's world headquarters there.

What's going on? Simply put, American firms are discovering that they can make a lot of money by producing their goods abroad, using labor that is often cheaper and sometimes more skilled than American workers, and selling products directly into buoyant foreign markets. Whereas profits earned by American firms in the United States dropped by 21 percent between 1989 and 1990, the overseas profits of American-owned firms surged by 15 percent. General Motors, Ford, IBM, DEC, and Coca-Cola, among many others, earned most of their 1990 profits outside the United States.

Of course, most American-headquartered firms are

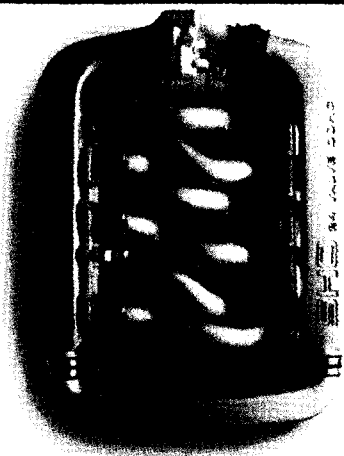
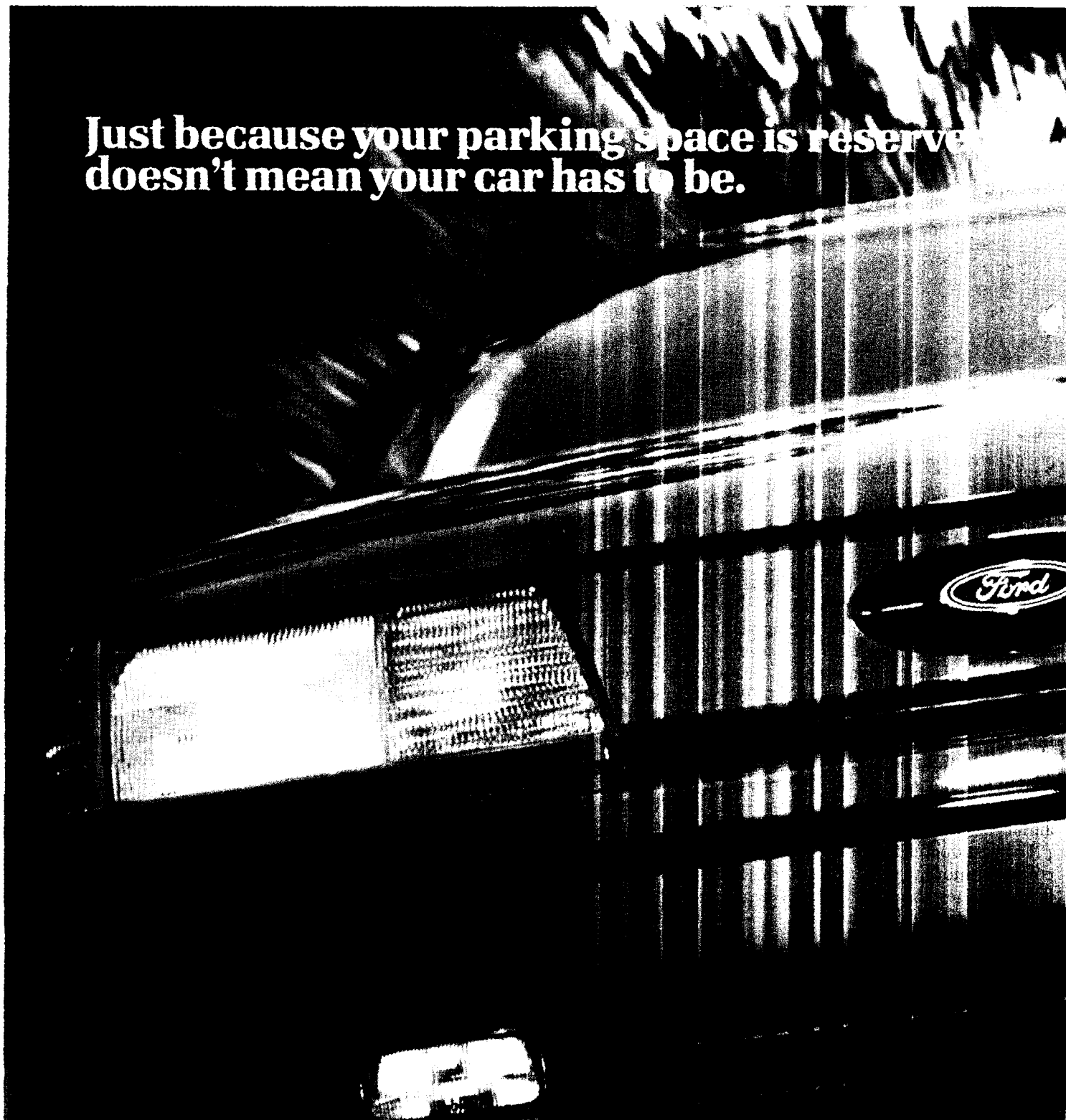
still very much American. But the trend is unmistakable, and it's picking up speed. American firms aren't exactly leaving America. It's more accurate to say that they are joining the world, and spreading their production across many continents, as they become truly global players.

The globalization of American industry has put the propounders of laissez-faire orthodoxy in an awkward position. For years they have assured us that American business is a far better guardian of the nation's competitiveness than government. And yet if America's private sector is going global, who's left to represent these interests except government? Not long ago I appeared on a panel with Jerry Jasonowski, the president of the National Association of Manufacturers, who offered the same old NAM line: "Sure, America needs to be more competitive," he said. "But American companies must take the lead in making that happen. Government only gets in the way." The third panelist was Gilbert Williamson, president of NCR. I asked Williamson if his company was prepared to take the lead in making America more competitive, as Jasonowski had urged. Williamson's reply was remarkably candid: "American competitiveness? I don't think about it at all," he said. "We at NCR think of ourselves as a globally competitive company that happens to be headquartered in the United States."

Globalization makes life no easier for the advocates of a government-sponsored industrial policy, however, because it renders problematic the object of such a policy. A dozen years ago I urged in these pages a partnership between American business and government, which would hasten the movement of capital and labor into the industries of the future, and ease the adjustment out of older industries in which the nation could no longer maintain a competitive advantage. I argued that America already had a de facto industrial policy—that we protected certain American businesses from

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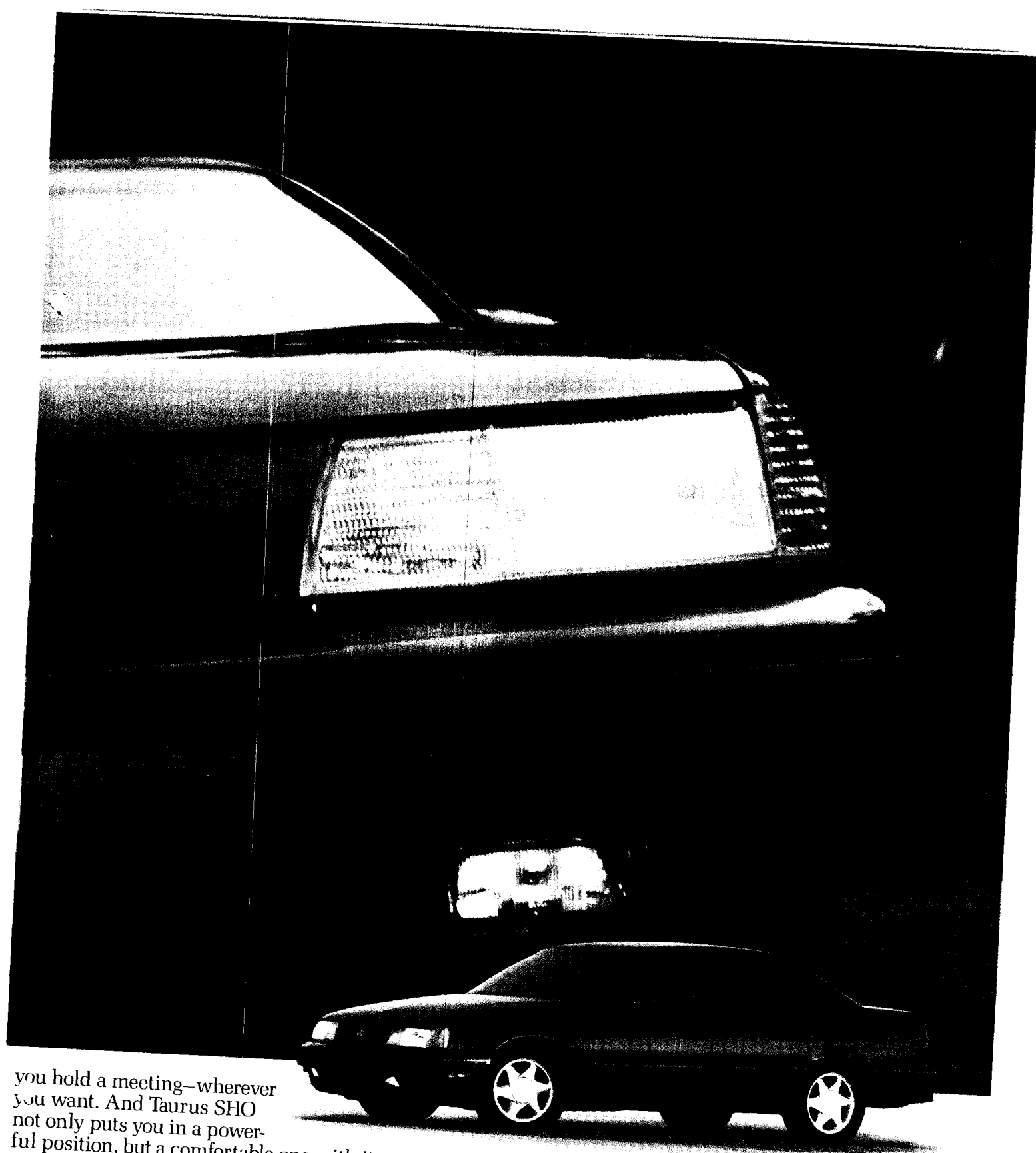
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global competition, favored others by insisting that foreigners open their markets to them, spurred other American businesses by giving them generous government research grants and tax abatements, subsidized still others through government procurement contracts, and penalized another set of industries through heavy-handed regulation and antitrust restrictions. It was simply a matter of doing all this more purposively and systematically—with an eye toward helping American companies gain a competitive edge.

The subsequent debate over whether the United States needed such an explicit industrial policy was intense but inconclusive. Rejecting it out of hand, the Reagan administration nevertheless protected America's automobile, steel, television, and semiconductor industries from foreign competition, subsidized the U.S. aerospace industry beyond anyone's wildest expectations, and pushed the dollar up so high that half the Rustbelt closed down. The Bush administration has shown itself even more eager to favor particular American industries. It has just decided to force Japan to buy 20 percent of its semiconductor chips from American companies and has prodded Kuwait into favoring American engineering contractors for the giant rebuilding effort there. It is in the process of bailing out America's commercial banks and has demonstrated great fondness for megaprojects like superconductor supercolliders, space stations, and the mapping of the entire human genetic code—but insists that none of this is an "industrial policy."

But regardless of whether America's industrial policy is openly acknowledged, it has become irrelevant. There's no reason anymore for the U.S. government to protect, subsidize, or otherwise favor U.S. companies. Americans may get a stream of dividend earnings from the far-flung successes of American-owned companies, yet citizens no longer necessarily get the critically important jobs within these companies—like research, design, engineering, and marketing. In the emerging global economy the returns on such human capital are significantly higher than the returns on financial capital.

In reviews of my latest book, critics have accused me of changing my position on industrial policy. But I haven't changed. American companies have changed. Their profitability and global market shares are no longer directly connected to the standard of living of Americans.

There's still a good argument for a U.S. industrial policy, but not the sort of policy that champions American corporations. It's a policy that champions American *workers*. Consider trade policy. Instead of pushing other nations to open their markets to American firms, the U.S. trade representative should insist that foreign nations allow in the work-products of Americans. By this logic, for example, it makes little sense to expend scarce bargaining leverage trying to get Japan to buy more semiconductor chips from American chip producers—when Texas Instru-

ments and the other major American suppliers of the Japanese market already design and make most of their chips in Japan. Nor is there any reason to force Japan to open its market to retail firms such as Toys-R-Us, most of whose inventory comes from Southeast Asia and Latin America. On the other hand, a high priority should be placed on ensuring that the European Community accepts American-based entertainment products—television shows, videos, records—even if the Americans who produce them happen to work for Sony. And we should ensure that other nations accept American-based biotech products, even if the Americans who design and produce them happen to work for Roche, the Swiss company that purchased Genentech.

Or consider government-supported research and development. The U.S. government still has an important role to play here; new knowledge easily spills out beyond any individual private R&D project, creating entire regions like Silicon Valley. And there's still a good reason to emphasize emerging technologies like microelectronics, advanced materials, and molecular biology, which are likely to form the foundation stones of future industries. But here again, government support should be given to American *workers* rather than to American firms. Each of the members of Sematech, the government-funded consortium organized to improve American semiconductor manufacturing, is now linked to a Japanese or European firm, or undertakes much of its production abroad. Why subsidize an American high-tech company that's going to do much of its development work abroad? Far better to subsidize any global company, headquartered anywhere—but only on condition that it use the government support to do research, development, and related engineering here in the United States, utilizing American workers.

A similar logic should apply to antitrust policy. The Justice Department is now relaxing antitrust restrictions on American-owned companies that wish to engage in joint production where there are likely to be significant economies of scale and where their competition is global. Media giants Time and Warner Communications were allowed to merge on the supposition that the combination would somehow make America stronger. But why not allow any global companies doing business in the United States exactly the same privilege, so long as the combination allows greater levels of productivity within the United States?

The same line of reasoning should lead to a different approach toward foreign investments in the United States, which are being subjected to a growing number of restrictions. Under the Exon-Florio amendment to the Omnibus Trade Act of 1988, for example, foreign investors must get formal approval from a high-level Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States before they can purchase an American company, in order to ensure that the investment doesn't compromise "national security." The apparent concern is that non-Americans might gain control over a critical technology, and then withhold it just when America needs

it. Some congressional Democrats want to tighten the restriction even further. But here again, the test for whether foreign investment is good for America should be whether it is likely to improve the skills and productivity of Americans. Our "national security" is better served by having more Americans who can produce critical technologies on American soil than by having American companies hire foreign citizens to do it abroad.

An industrial policy that focused on the American work force would also, of course, emphasize education and training. And though many of the recently proposed educational reforms make sense, there's no denying that America has been scrimping on schools and worker training. Average per-pupil expenditures on kindergarten through twelfth-grade schooling in the United States trail eight other industrialized countries—and that average masks huge disparities among school districts. Consider also that the average 35-year-old public school teacher in the former West Germany now earns \$51,000 a year, in contrast to the \$28,000 earned by his or her American counterpart, and that 90 percent of non-college-bound youth in West Germany are enrolled in apprenticeship programs that have specific jobs waiting for them upon completion. America slashed its federal training budget by half during the 1980s.

In addition to an activist industrial policy aimed at making the American work force more competitive, we need a national bargaining agent to represent our interests in negotiations with global firms. Most other national governments, already well versed in the habits of global companies, actively bargain with global capital to lure or retain good jobs for their citizens. "There is no flag on capital," says Argentina's President Carlos Menem. "I ask myself, What is national capital? Is it the \$50 billion in flight capital that has left the country via Argentine business executives? Or resources used by multinationals to produce here?" Menem, like other national leaders, is forever courting global companies. But America's bargaining agent isn't located in Washington. In fact, America doesn't have a single bargaining agent. It bargains through the offices of fifty state governors and hundreds of mayors, each of whom offers tax breaks and subsidies willy-nilly to any company that might bring jobs or threatens to take them away—regardless of the nationality of corporate headquarters. Forty-three states even maintain permanent offices and staffs in foreign capitals to keep informed about new possibilities.

Global corporations actively play America's governors and mayors off against one another, seeking the best deal possible. Typically, Kentucky and Tennessee vie for a new Honda factory, resulting in a \$100 million package of tax breaks for Honda. ConAgra, the giant food-processing and commodity-trading company, threatens to move to Iowa unless Nebraska changes its tax code, and Nebraska capitulates. "It's like a poker game," says Donald Pursell, former director of Nebraska's

Bureau of Business Research. "Nebraska makes a bid, Iowa ups it."

In such bargaining contests, large nations that bargain as a whole with global managers—or groups of smaller nations that pool their bargaining strength behind a single agent—naturally have much more clout than small nations or separate states and cities. By avoiding internal bidding contests they pay far less to attract investment and have an easier time getting the jobs they want, when and where they want them. The European Community now reviews location incentives offered by member nations in order to minimize bidding by one against the other. After 1992 Europe will be in an even stronger bargaining position: guaranteed access to Europe's newly integrated market of 230 million people (and the real possibility of being frozen out if you're not producing there) is itself a powerful lure.

Thus a final feature of America's new industrial policy should be the creation of a U.S. investment representative, parallel to the U.S. trade representative—who would pre-empt state and local bargaining efforts and thus secure the best deal possible from global firms. (Obviously there would still be political jockeying for where the firms would locate, but at least the internal competition wouldn't work to the detriment of the taxpayers.) The tools available to the USIR in negotiating on our behalf already exist, but they are scattered across the national landscape: tax abatements, tax credits, R&D incentives, loans and loan guarantees, public capital investment, and more. An added advantage of a USIR: if other nations threatened to close off their markets to global corporations unless they made certain investments there, the USIR would be in the position to use similar threats as a means of ensuring America's fair share of such investments.

These proposals will be anathema to those who don't want to give up the fantasy of a single, integrated, wondrously free global marketplace—the way children resist giving up Santa and the Tooth Fairy. Others will object to these proposals on opposite grounds. Such individuals want to cling to the contrary fantasy that American corporations are still tied to the American polity, and are only too happy to sacrifice potential worldwide profits in order to keep their good jobs in America.

The truth is that the global marketplace is not a wonderland in which assets naturally move to their highest and best uses, because all governments are cajoling and threatening global firms of whatever nationality—seeking good jobs for their citizens. But at the same time, and particularly in the United States, the old linkages between government and corporations headquartered within the nation are breaking down. Thus has the debate between free marketeers and advocates of a business-government "partnership" to make America more competitive been rendered a meaningless anachronism. It is time we recognized the New Economic Order that is emerging, and took steps to advance our interests within it. ●

BOOKS & TheArts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Differently Good

Sometimes an exception doesn't prove the rule, it demonstrates a different rule. Generally, it's true, I'd hold, that good acting has a double texture: the performance plus our simultaneous awareness that a good actor is creating the performance. The presence and ability of Christopher Walken, the man himself, are part of his accomplished acting in *The Comfort of Strangers*.

But there is another kind of good acting in which, though we are aware of its excellence all along, the persona of the actor seems ingested in the work. Here the erasure of virtuosity—while being a virtuoso—is an aesthetic imperative. Such a performance was Max von Sydow's in *Pelle the Conqueror*. Such is the performance by the Turkish actor Necmettin Cobanoglu in *Journey of Hope* (Miramax).

This is the picture that won the Best Foreign Language Oscar at the recent Academy Awards. It had been seen by relatively few, and when the winner was announced, the title was greeted by near silence, spattered with minimal polite applause. The audience favorite, I suppose, was *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Now *Journey of Hope* can be widely seen, and odd though it is to agree with an Academy Award, I think it a far better film than *Cyrano*. Past that weak criterion, it's a fine work in itself.

The screenplay, based on fact, is by Xavier Koller, a Swiss writer-director, and Feride Cicekoglu, a woman, who is a Turkish screenwriter. A present-day Turkish farmer immigrates to Switzerland with his wife and small son—one of their seven children. They have been

having a rough time of it and have heard that Switzerland is the land of milk and chocolate. Grandparents take care of the other children, and after selling all of the little they have for capital, the parents set out with one child. They don't have all the necessary papers, but they are determined.

The picture chronicles their journey, their courage, naïveté, strength in the hands of the friendly or callous or thieving people they meet—in Istanbul, in Italy, in the snowy Alpine passes through which they try to slip into Switzerland. Of drama in any conventionally developed sense, there is none. Except for some human-comedy touches in Italy—and even these may be factual—the whole takes on the quality of a documentary, gripping us with its actuality, amazing us that a camera could have been present all the while this was “actually” happening.

That peculiar amazement grows out of the three major performances, most cer-

tainly that of Cobanoglu as the farmer. Hollow-cheeked, burning-eyed, small-chinned, unshaven—and stiffly proud—he makes the farmer a man so steeped in his own being, so authentic in his persistence and devotion, that there is no room for the histrion. When we remember the details of the film process—the cues, the waiting, the retakes, etc., etc.—the unflecked verity in Cobanoglu's performance is all the more overwhelming. The sequences in which he struggles through a nighttime mountain blizzard, carrying his son are almost biblical in their stark, unadorned stature. His very last scene in the film is a silent poem of grief.

Nur Surer, as his wife, is of the same caliber. She has somewhat less to contribute, but it is all done in the same vein of total selfless subscription to this person, to this journey. The boy, Emin Sivas, is absolutely free of child-actorishness. Something cultural, even genetic, seems to have taken over with him. He understands that he is a member of a family—in several senses.

The title produces a slight resistance beforehand, an opposition to heart-tug. This takes about twenty seconds to disappear. It becomes quickly apparent that Koller is a director of true seriousness and commitment, with skill and taste. The cinematographer, Elemér Ragályi, is first class. He is Hungarian (he shot Rózsa's *Love, Mother*) and has also worked extensively abroad. This is the best work of his that I've seen; it proves yet again that cinematographers, like actors, need occasions to which they can rise. Ragályi's work here is like Cobanoglu's, beautiful without any intrusive pride in that fact.

In an age that has had millions of refugees and emigrants—the Kurds are only the latest victims—*Journey of Hope*, small in scale, sees the world in Blake's grain of sand.

Impromptu (Hemdale) has acting of an entirely different order: good but knowingly so. It might be called theatrical act-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Class Action. Gene Hackman all the way. And Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio almost all the way. They are lawyers, father and daughter, in a Hollywood entertainment that really sizzles. (Reviewed 4/15/91) **The Comfort of Strangers.** Harold Pinter's screenplay, from an Ian McEwan novel, is nearly perfect. Christopher Walken is perfect, and the three other principals are not far behind, in this sexually mysterious encounter of two couples in Venice. Paul Schrader directs exquisitely. (4/29/81) **La Femme Nikita.** Luc Besson's furious thriller about a murderer—the femme—who is trained to be a government assassin. Incredible, but not until it's over. Anne Parillaud dazzles as Nikita. (5/6/91) **Paris Is Burning.** A fascinating and eventually quite moving documentary, by Jennie Livingston, about gay black fashion shows. (4/22/91) —SK

ing except that the difference is not between film and theater but in intent. *Impromptu* is one more go at the George Sand-Frédéric Chopin story, with Musset, Liszt, and Delacroix as attendant characters. The very idea of "pure" acting in that heady swirl of romantics is funny.

This is not to suggest that all the acting here is bad. The superb Judy Davis, last seen prominently as the constricted Miss Quested in *A Passage to India*, plays George Sand magnificently. A beautiful woman herself, she understands that Sand was not one. Mostly in male dress and mostly without cosmetics, she comes at her men—and at us—with the force of a consciously performing character. She has grace and several varieties of truth, but she is uninterested in the unhistrionic.

As Chopin, Hugh Grant, who was in *Maurice* and *White Mischief*, succeeds in the delicate job of playing a delicate person without a dram of preciousness. This Chopin could easily be silly and priggish; Grant is neither. He creates a credible man who is first repelled by the direct Sand temperament, then is fascinated by her very forthrightness and is won.

As Liszt, Julian Sands has little flavor. Neither has Ralph Brown as Delacroix. Mandy Patinkin has somewhat too much as Musset. Emma Thompson is a surprise pleasure as a fluttery culture-vulture duchess. She was a rather sober Princess Katherine in *Henry V*, directed by and starring her husband, Kenneth Branagh. Here she delights twice, with her acting and with her revelation of range. As Liszt's inamorata, the Countess d'Agoult, Bernadette Peters is jarring. In a film that has Thompson as a duchess, Peters might play a scrubwoman, not a countess.

Sarah Kernochan's screenplay avoids some but not all of the pitfalls of history-confit drama. "Ah, hello, Chopin, I was just talking to Liszt and Delacroix about you" is not a line from the screenplay, but Kernochan sometimes comes dangerously close. James Lapine, her husband, directed. He is considerably experienced in design and in the theater; this is his first film, and his work is disappointing. Visually, Lapine does all right with the givens of historical film—for instance, carriages drawn by prancing horses up a long chateau driveway—but he shows no special acuity in the composition of frames or in the effect of the succession of images in film. As for the acting, he has presumably been of help to three of his cast, Davis and Grant and Thompson, less helpful to others. And he has been surprisingly clumsy with his background actors, in the streets and at parties. All of them seem like extras, ill at ease and obviously choreographed. ●

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Schlep Part II: Escape from Saigon

Following heated debate over the New York casting, saluted with a front-page photo in *The New York Times*, *Miss Saigon* has come from London to the Broadway Theater. Thanks to Cameron Mackintosh, a shrewd and stubborn producer, spectators are stampeding to pay \$100 a ticket to cover the musical's \$10 million cost; the advance sale is said to be \$36 million. No wonder the audience starts clapping before the curtain rises; they're endorsing their own expenditures. A somewhat more jaundiced critical battalion is no more able to slow the inexorable advance of this juggernaut than Saddam Hussein could stop the tanks and planes of General Schwarzkopf. I use the military analogy advisedly: *Miss Saigon* not only depicts the amorous adventures of American servicemen in Vietnam but features a fully rigged helicopter landing onstage in iconic homage to our ignominious flight from Saigon. Not since the chandelier floated down from the flies in *Phantom of the Opera* have music, mayhem, and machinery converged in such riotous excess.

Although *Miss Saigon* exploits a less than heroic event in American history—not to mention the anti-Western seduced-and-abandoned plot of *Madama Butterfly*—the Americans in the show do not come off ignobly. The Pinkerton conceived by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg has been transformed from a callous naval officer into a warm-hearted Marine who does his best to get his girlfriend out of Saigon, only to be frustrated by pushing crowds and military commands. Back safely in his American suburb and married to a woman of his own race, he suffers pangs of conscience in the form of bad dreams. When he learns that his lost Butterfly is living in Bangkok with the child he sired during their brief relationship, he even returns to the Orient to find her, accompanied by his understanding wife.

Butterfly—in the Boublil-Schönberg version she's more like a cocoon—is no longer a guileless Japanese geisha. Now she's a guileless Vietnamese Lolita from the countryside named Kim. Kim was abducted from her village to work in a whorehouse called Dreamland, whose proprietor—the Engineer—peddles her

"virgin ass" to GIs. She falls for Chris, the first Yank she sleeps with, who regards her, in turn, as "the one good thing I've found out here." After one night in each other's arms, they vow to be an eternal duet and soon join in a musicalized Buddhist wedding ceremony, thus proving that any plot too silly to be spoken, along with any event too implausible to be acted, can always be sung.

The marriage is interrupted by the appearance of Kim's intended, a Viet Cong named Thuy, who curses her for breaking her father's word. In a subsequent scene—after Saigon has been rechristened Ho Chi Minh City, an event celebrated by a mammoth production number in front of a huge golden statue of Ho—Kim is blindfolded and reviled as "the American whore." Thuy reappears. He's a high-ranking army officer now and is still demanding his contractual rights. Kim shows him her little boy ("Now you see why I must tell you no"), and shoots him when Thuy draws a knife on the child. Although they'd both prefer a passport to the States, Kim and the Engineer escape to Thailand, where he continues to peddle bar girls, Kim included, to American servicemen. Like Chris, Kim is suffering conscience pangs. She is plagued by the ghost of Thuy, his face daubed with #10 pancake, who sings, "You will never be free, not as long as there's me." Nevertheless, she is resolutely determined to make her child an American citizen even at the cost of her own life.

This is also the purpose of Children of Servicemen, a non-profit organization led by Chris's Marine buddy, John, who gives a stern musical lecture, at the beginning of the second act, on the obligations of GI parenthood. John's lecture is accompanied by filmed sequences, which momentarily subdue the show-biz glitter with shots of suffering Vietnamese children. But have no fear. The shining nobility of musical theater is soon restored. Knowledge of his paternity has increased Chris's conscience pangs ("I shattered Kim; now Ellen too"), and so he goes to Bangkok to do the right thing.

The obligatory reunion never takes place. Instead of finding Chris, Kim comes upon Ellen, and implores her to take the child to the States ("There are days," muses Ellen, "when your life

clouds over"). After another big production number in which the Engineer fantasizes about "The American Dream"—an enormous white car with flashing headlights that excites him so much that he mounts it sexually—Chris finally finds his child. In an orgy of self-sacrifice, Kim shoots herself and the two lovers kiss bloodily amid the mounting crescendo of the music.

Everything is created and performed with the smooth mechanical efficiency we have come to expect of the Schlep, that profitable export that, for the past ten years, has been bestriding our musical stage like a colossus. Although it is occasionally distinguished by some soft bluesy sax numbers, the uninterrupted music of Schönberg never matches the rousing excitement he achieved in *Les Misérables*. Like the glutinous strains of Andrew Lloyd-Webber, the score often seems to have been squeezed through a pasta machine, while the rhyme schemes in the monosyllabic lyrics of Richard Maltby and Alain Boublil appear to have been composed by a computer. Nicholas Hytner, the director, has concocted a production that may have been influenced by Peter Sellars's approach to John Adams's opera *Nixon in China*, with its simulation of precision Red Brigade choreography, complete with masks and automatic weapons, alternating with interludes borrowed from *South Pacific* and *Teahouse of the August Moon*. And although John Napier's production design is exquisite to look at, with its panels of hoistable silk painted with projections and David Hersey's pinpoint lighting, the chief physical attractions of the evening are the helicopter and the automobile, both of which left me with the desire to climb in them and escape from Saigon myself.

As for the performances, these are hard to judge considering the thinness of the written characters. Jonathan Pryce, looking a bit like Stanley Laurel gone to seed, brings sleaze, smarminess, and physical agility to the role of the Engineer. (He seems to have more arms than an octopus.) And Lea Salonga as Kim breaks through the impossible Stella Dallas nobility of her part with genuine freshness and innocence. Kim's tiny child, Tam, as played by Brian R. Baldomero, draws the kind of focus, with his sweet vulnerability, that used to tempt W. C. Fields to murder child actors. And the chorus of bar girls—interchangeably used as Vietnamese and Thais—displays enough thighs, bosoms, and behinds to satisfy the most discriminating readers of *Playboy*.

I think I might have enjoyed *Miss Saigon* a little more had it been a little less self-righteous. But I'm not a fan of sermons on guilt in musical form. *Miss Sai-*

gon shares its misplaced hortatory tone with a large number of middlebrow dramatic works. Ever since Rodgers and Hammerstein first informed us, in *South Pacific*, that "You've Got to Be Taught" to be racially prejudiced, what was once a genre of unashamed theatrical escapism has been generously scattering liberal pieties into its profit-making entertainments. In *Miss Saigon*'s program, passing for dramaturgical material, is a photograph from *France-Soir*, taken in 1985 and reputed to have been the "original inspiration" for the musical. It shows a crying Amerasian child being taken from his mother by a group of Vietnamese.

The photo is touching, and Mackintosh endorses *Miss Saigon*'s inspirational plea for the relocation of GI orphans (the youngest of whom must by now be 18) by contributing the cost of two seats at each show to the cause. This seems a little niggardly, considering the show's potential weekly take of \$765,000, but it may silence those who ask whether the Vietnamese children who appear in the filmed sequences are receiving any royalties for their unwitting performances. It is a real question whether this glitzorama is an appropriate vehicle for stimulating charitable impulses—and whether peo-

ple seeking a night on the town are going to respond to such exhortations with anything more practical than passing nods and sentimental sighs. After the curtain of *Nicholas Nickleby* came down on an impoverished waif in the hero's arms, I seem to remember the audience gingerly wending its way past the homeless lying on the streets of New York.

I hesitate to throw doubt on the motives of the people associated with this show, but I am disturbed by the way theater is increasingly trying to justify itself as a medium for solving social problems. Let us be clear about the limitations of the stage, even in its most serious manifestations. It cannot cure AIDS. It cannot resolve racial conflict. It cannot do away with toxic waste. It cannot end unemployment. It cannot stop wars. It cannot wash your car or mow your lawn or repair your driveway or improve your schools. In short, as Chekhov told us, the theater is not empowered to solve problems, it can only present them correctly, and the correct presentation of problems is the task of dramatic artists capable of understanding the immense and untidy complications of life, not of theatrical entrepreneurs who crudely recycle *Madama Butterfly* at a hundred dollars a throw. ●

Ol' Blue Lips

BY MAUREEN DOWD

Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography by Kitty Kelley

(Simon & Schuster, 603 pp., \$24.95)

Kitty Kelley's achievement is extraordinary. She has provided a reason for sympathy with Nancy Reagan. She has taken one of the shrewdest, coldest, most manipulative women in American politics, a woman who broke new ground in spousal power, and transformed her into a victim. Kelley is a mean and greedy writer, so drunk on sensationalism that she lacks compassion and understanding. Her subject was a mean and greedy First Lady, so drunk on power that she lacked compassion and understanding. Both believe that nothing succeeds like excess and pettiness. Both are soap opera vixens who accrued so many enemies in their climb to respectability and riches that the air around them is rancid with revenge.

And yet all the sanctimonious complaining about Kelley's book misses the

point. Of course, the book is tawdry. Of course, the book is, in some spots, loosely sourced and over the top. Of course, it is not balanced: it's pie-in-the-face journalism, the literary equivalent of watching the Los Angeles police interrogate a minority suspect. Of course, there are mistakes in it. (It was not Mies van der Rohe who said that God is in the details.) The point, however, is that Kelley's portrait is not essentially untrue. The face is familiar.

And that is more than can be said of more esteemed biographers. Bob Woodward may have been able to document incontrovertibly every line of coke that John Belushi enjoyed, but he was never able to capture the spirit of Belushi, or to explain the allure of drugs. Robert Caro's skills as an investigative reporter inspire awe, yet there is reason to believe that *Means of Ascent*, the second install-

ment of his biography of Lyndon Johnson, is wrong in the fundamentals of its interpretation. There are the trees and there is the forest. Woodward and Caro produced a blizzard of particulars, but they just didn't get it. The same cannot be said of Kelley, even if she writes recklessly and employs some dubious methods and is promoted hysterically by her publisher.

Nancy Reagan is a wonderful subject for a full-scale biography. Like Barbara Bush, she was, in many ways, a more astute politician than her husband. Unlike Barbara Bush, however, she was great copy, an imperious Roman empress or a bloodthirsty French aristocrat disguised as an adoring American wife. If Kelley's book is not balanced, in other words, it is not because it renders a harsh judgment of its subject. A harsh judgment is what its subject deserves. Nancy Reagan *was* the epitome of her time, of its pious values and grasping mores; she was the mother to an era of materialistic dementia. Kelley's pen, unfortunately, is a jackhammer, and skips straight to the verdict.

Not without humor, though; her pages on America's first astrological administration, on the important-looking manila envelopes rushed to the East Gate of the

White House with pressing and for-eyes-only intelligence on the "malevolent movements" of Saturn and Uranus, are hilarious. And another significant misimpression of Kelley's work should be immediately corrected. She is not any more salacious in her treatment of her subject (and her subject's husband) than other biographers have been in their treatment of theirs. She does not practice sexual history more than, say, William Manchester did in his life of Winston Churchill, or Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith did in their life of Jackson Pollock. Her unsubtle and unsophisticated book, in fact, broaches subtle and sophisticated questions. How did the Reagans use their power? How were their personal lives at variance with the conservative morality that was at the core of Ronald Reagan's political philosophy and popular appeal? To what extent did they sell the presidency and commercialize the White House? How much political illusion is permissible in a democracy?

As is well known, Barbara Bush has challenged the accuracy of Kelley's anecdote about how she sent the Reagans a Christmas wreath, which Nancy then rewrapped and sent on to one of her California girlfriends. But neither Mrs.

Bush nor anybody else who knew or studied Nancy Reagan in the White House can challenge the essentials of Kelley's portrait. Mrs. Bush cannot rise up and defend her predecessor as a sweet, thoughtful individual who was exquisitely alive to the limitations of her place as the wife of a popularly elected official—not least because, as Kelley points out, and as everyone in Washington knew, Nancy Reagan treated Barbara and George Bush like dirt. In eight years Mrs. Reagan never once invited the Bushes to dinner in the family quarters of the White House, not even to reciprocate for their hospitality at the vice president's residence. During the Washington summit of 1987 she did not allow Mrs. Bush to accept Raisa Gorbachev's invitation to tour the National Gallery with her, and on occasion she even instructed Mrs. Bush on what she was to say to the press. She nicknamed Bush "Whiney," spread salacious gossip about him, trashed him as spineless to her lunch pals, and persuaded her husband to give him a belated and tepid initial endorsement in 1988.

The contrast between Mrs. Reagan and Mrs. Bush is a useful one. When Nancy Reagan came to the White House,

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she created a furor when she indicated (not for the first time and not for the last) that she had no compunctions about trading on her position. She proudly disclosed, as Kelley notes, that the White House beauty salon had been

equipped with thousands of dollars' worth of free furnishings, fabrics, and cosmetics from the beauty industry. Donations for the renovation included a \$3,700 Peruvian rug, a \$400 salmon-colored Louis XV lounge chair, a \$346.65 shampoo bowl with temperature controls, two hair dryers valued at a total of \$1,200, a \$750 white leather chair, a \$230 manicurist's stool, \$1,800 worth of red and green glazed chintz draperies and wallcoverings from Clarence House, and \$300 worth of lipsticks, eye shadows, creams, and foundations donated by Redken Laboratories.

When Mrs. Bush took over, by contrast, the beauty salon was reduced to a single hair dryer and a single sink and a single mirror, and the rest of the room was used as a home for the box full of newspapers where Millie's puppies were weaned. The message was loud and clear. Her disdain for Kitty Kelley notwithstanding, Barbara Bush must be counted among Nancy Reagan's sharpest critics.

"Trash and fiction," Mrs. Bush said of Kelley's book. Trash, maybe; but not fiction. Kelley's books should be read in the spirit in which they are rendered. Just as the Reagans offered a mixture of show business and politics, so Kelley offers a mixture of gossip and biography. The problem with her books is that they fall between the stools. They are neither completely tacky nor completely scholarly. To read them as one would read a tabloid is to miss the instruction that they contain. To read them as one would read a work of history is to risk distorting the record. Kelley's achievement, I guess, is to have honed the bastard genre of biography in the culture of celebrity. She brings to mind Baudelaire's advice to readers of newspapers, that you can learn a great deal from them if you read them with the proper contempt.

Kelley's genre, more specifically, is the

"unauthorized biography." True, the unauthorized biography runs the risk of certain kinds of errors from which an authorized biography is protected. But authorized lives have their own pitfalls, in plenty. Even (or especially) authorized biographies can be skewed: access distorts as much as the lack of it. Sometimes, by poking around in the garbage of the powerful, the unauthorized biographers merely turn up garbage. Sometimes, however, they turn up sleds that say Rosebud. Kelley's account may be relentless, but it matches the accounts of

justified; indeed, it is even a case of just desserts. For Kelley has chosen for her subject an evil genius of authorization, of spin control, of image management, of Madison Avenue-style propaganda. In response to the well-packaged, high-gloss imagery contrived and promoted by the Reagans and their admirers, it is only fitting to have the well-packaged, high-gloss trashing of that imagery by Kelley. The spinners are being unspun.

It is important to remember, moreover, that for the duration of their Wash-

ington reign, until it came to a thudding halt on the afternoon that Edwin Meese announced that money from the sale of arms to Iran had been diverted to the contras, the Reagans were treated with kid gloves, not least by the press corps that covered them. Exhibit A of the journalistic delinquency of those dizzy years, when it was morning in America and Washington was a city of flatterers and flacks, must be *First Lady, A Portrait of Nancy Reagan*, a glossy picture book that appeared in 1986 under the name of Chris Wallace, who is, please recall, a journalist. "The reason she looks adoringly at her husband is because she adores him," reads the caption above a picture of the Reagans, wearing red sweaters and sitting with their TV trays. And there are the testimonials: "Nancy's anything but frivolous. She's very level-headed, she's very sincere, she's very down to earth, and why she seemed frivolous I don't know" (Bonita Gran-

ville Wrather); "Nancy Reagan has a terrific sense of humor, a terrific sense of style, is very giving, and is very tuned in to the world around her" (Charles Wick); "She's one of the most special people that I've ever known in the world" (Michael Deaver); and so on.

The Reagans churned out their own biographies of themselves, or of what they imagined themselves to be. Ronald Reagan's good-natured and gauzy *An American Life* set the historical record back significantly. The man who ignored civil rights groups and implied that Martin Luther King Jr. was a Communist earnestly assured readers that he



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

other chroniclers and memoirists of the Reagan era, such as Peggy Noonan, Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus, Donald Reagan, Helene von Damm, and Selwa Roosevelt. Indeed, the surprise about Kelley's portrait is how little it surprises. Much of her material is not new. But much of it is true.

There is something splendidly democratic about the "unauthorized biography." It is premised on skepticism about the official versions of public lives. Its real theme is hypocrisy, which cannot be established, of course, without an "invasion of privacy." About the Reagans, surely, unauthorized biography is amply

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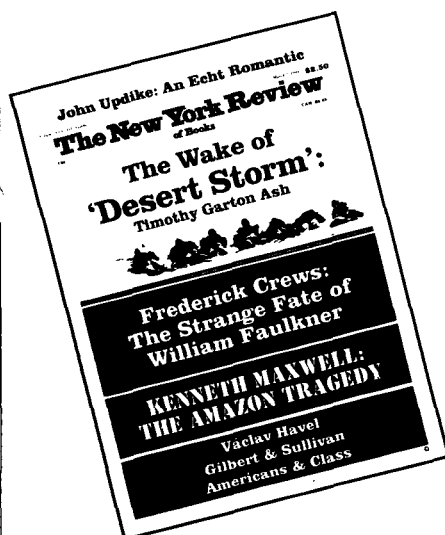
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grew up in a home where there was "no more grievous sin" than racial bigotry. It was left to Kelley to point out what many in Washington knew, that Reagan loved ethnic and gay jokes, even jokes about AIDS.

In *My Turn*, a book animated by vindictiveness and written to settle scores, Nancy Reagan portrayed her daughter Patti as an insensitive child for failing to show up for her grandmother's funeral. It was left to Kelley to correct and unprettify the self-portrait, to reveal that Nancy did not go to her paternal grandmother's funeral, much to her family's dismay, or even to her father's, since she had excised both of them from her life many years before their deaths. Patti Davis recently confirmed one of Kelley's most chilling anecdotes, that as a little girl she was beaten in the face by her mother with a hairbrush.

Straining to be kind and to win the sort of parental love that she always craved, Maureen Reagan produced her own harrowing memoir of self-delusion, punctuated by unwittingly devastating anecdotes about how cold and remote her father and stepmother could be. Michael Reagan added to the frightening family lore. And Patti Davis, still one of the walking wounded, is working on a third novel about a woman "deeply affected by a psychologically domineering mother." If the parent is to be known by the children, it may be that Kelley's book is not cruel enough.

I had my own experiences reporting on Morticia Addams, I mean Nancy Reagan, sporadically over the past decade; and on the basis of those experiences it is hard for me to work up much sympathy for her, because the portrait that she peddled to the public then was even more unbalanced than the one that Kelley is peddling now. I remember a campaign swing through the South in 1984, the President and the First Lady trumpeting family values, when I asked Mrs. Reagan about the public complaints of her stepson, Michael Reagan, that his father and his stepmother had not invited him to the White House, that they had not seen their grandson Cameron in years, that they had never seen their granddaughter Ashley. I was immediately met with Nancy Reagan's best move, with that look that could melt buildings, as one of her aides put it. "Well, of course, Cameron was there for the inauguration," she replied, referring to the inauguration four years before. "And the little girl is only a year old." Any suggestion that she and Ronnie neglected their grandchildren or fought with their children would be totally wrong.

We have since learned otherwise.

If you ever watched Nancy Reagan in front of the cameras hugging a scruffy young adult who was telling her about a drug problem (one of her staff's vain attempts, abetted by First Astrologer Joan Quigley, to replace Nancy's image as "the Hairdo with Anxiety" with the munificent contours of Lady Bountiful), you knew that she was pining for Le Cirque. She did what she had to do to silence the criticism that she had none of a First Lady's social concerns, or rather concerns about American society; but you could almost hear the gritting of her teeth. She was like the aristocrat in the old joke who instructed his butler to remove a beggar from the premises because the beggar was breaking his heart. But she could spend hours making the White House chef perfect a dessert for Prince Charles, so that the brown sugar feathers on the ice cream crown looked exactly like the British royal insignia.

Talking to Kelley, Shirley Watkins, one of Mrs. Reagan's secretaries, confirms this impression of contrived compassion:

She didn't care, and we could not always manufacture a caring attitude for her because she would not take the time to be that kind of First Lady. Mothers desperate about their children on drugs would call and ask if Mrs. Reagan would send them a letter or make a phone call to encourage them. I tried once to get her to make that kind of phone call and almost got fired for "bothering" her. She had been on the phone with Betsy Bloomingdale.

It was clear to all of us professional Nancy-watchers that she did not like to be around people with physical imperfections. Watkins said that she once asked Jack Courtmanche, who became Mrs. Reagan's chief of staff in 1986, if Mrs. Reagan could make time to meet a boy dying of muscular dystrophy who had written the White House that his dying wish was to meet the First Lady. "And he said, 'Absolutely not. The First Lady doesn't want her picture taken with some drooly kid on a respirator. It's too disgusting.'"

John Sears, the Reagan campaign manager in 1976, told Kelley that both the Reagans were obsessed with illusions and appearances. "It wasn't just Nancy," Sears said. "Reagan himself insisted on always looking good. That was his first priority. He wouldn't do something unless he looked good doing it, and Nancy aided and abetted him in this obsession. In that way, they reinforced each other." If the lie looked better, go with the lie. And so Nancy Reagan did, on everything from big lies, like "borrowing" a million dollars' worth of designer dresses when

she knew it was a tax violation, to little lies, like pretending that Reagan didn't dye his hair or take naps.

The hypocrisies were spectacular. She relentlessly pursued Jacqueline Onassis, even though the Reagans were so anti-Kennedy in the early 1960s that they had refused to cancel a cocktail party two nights after John Kennedy was assassinated, and Nancy had ordered her guests not to talk about "you know what." Nancy Davis had struggled for ten years in New York and Hollywood to become a famous actress, and had aggressively pursued television parts and commercials in the 1960s; but because Nancy Reagan did not want to seem ambitious when she played the politician's devoted wife, she dismissed her career as "nothing more than a stopgap" and denounced "silly women's libbers" who fought for equal rights. She denounced homosexuality as a "sickness" and declared that she could not vote for homosexuals for public office because they would not be emotionally "strong," but she surrounded herself with lunching gay men like Jerome Zipkin and Truman Capote.

Her obsession with appearance, and her world-class stinginess, led her to sell the prestige of her husband's office to the highest bidder. Consider only one of many examples of her high-placed grasping. After the 1980 election, the Gucci shop in Beverly Hills closed down for two hours to all other customers so that its owners could do for the First Lady-elect what the owners of a Rodeo Drive boutique did for Richard Gere when he wished to spend obscenely in *Pretty Woman*. As Carlo Celoni, the manager, told Kelley: "She refused to take the things free after the White House. She said she had to take them all before the inauguration. Up to that time, we would give her everything gratis. I was invited to both inaugurations." Celoni's itemization of Mrs. Reagan's haul is a primary document of the decade:

When she came in after the presidential election, I gave her a black silk egg purse (\$600), a miniature beige calf bag with bamboo handle—style 0633—the \$650 one that Jackie Onassis made famous in America, of course, it was a favorite of Nancy's, too—plus a dressy daytime black lizard bag (\$650), and a white evening bag accented with our double G (\$850) to go with the white Galanos gown she planned to wear to the inaugural balls.

And it didn't end there: "After presenting the purses, Celoni summoned his assistant, Ellen Pollon, to bring in the clothes," Kelley writes:

a herringbone topcoat with a plush leather collar (\$1,500), a silk afternoon dress in

fuchsia and gold with a gold belt and matching shoes (\$2,000), a two-piece multi-colored silk dress (\$575), several gabardine skirts (\$350 apiece) and matching silk blouses (\$350 apiece), a black and gold silk blouse (\$350), a leather jacket (\$1,000), seven ties for Ronald Reagan (\$35 apiece), several pairs of women's shoes (\$200 a piece), and a pair of white satin pumps decorated with rhinestones to wear to the inaugural ball (\$350).

The public furor notwithstanding, Nancy Reagan never grasped why her constant bartering of the presidency was wrong. Very late in the game she was still taking millions for her drug fund from Middle Eastern potentates and businessmen trying to curry favor with the United States on arms deals and other Middle Eastern matters.

She led a very angry life. She was always trying to "get" people or fire people or banish people or punish people. When she heard Geraldine Ferraro defending her position on abortion by charging that Reagan had no right to call himself a "good Christian" because his policies were "terribly unfair" and "discriminatory," Nancy swung into action. An aide to Stuart Spencer told Kelley: "Within seconds, the First Lady, who was watching Ferraro on television, was on the phone to Spencer. 'I want you to get that woman any way you can,' she said. 'You get her! Do you hear me?' Spencer hung up and turned to his aide. 'What've ya got on Ferraro? Let's get going. We've got a customer.'" Spencer's aide said that they leaked the story to the *New York Post* that Ferraro's father had once been arrested for numbers running. (In the event, of course, dirty tricks against Ferraro were not merely wrong, they were also redundant.)

Kelley's critics are pointing to her own zeal to "get" Nancy Reagan by loosing the allegation that the First Lady and Frank Sinatra had, as *The Washington Times* reported with horror, "geriatric sex in the White House." (There is a sense, of course, in which such an allegation casts its figures in a flattering light. Do not go gentle into that good night.) Kelley writes that Nancy Reagan's crush on the singer began when she was First Lady of California, long before she learned that he had referred to her at the beginning of her husband's tenure as governor as "a dope with fat ankles." "The flirtation continued for months, but no one took it seriously until Sinatra flew to Chicago and Nancy followed him a few days later. Her top aide later admitted making private arrangements for her, ostensibly to visit her parents when she was actually with Sinatra in his suite at the Ambassador East," Kelley writes.

"The affair, which continued for years, was not out of character for Sinatra, who was unmarried at the time. He was accustomed to taking the wives of his friends for his own pleasure."

The top aide is not identified. Kelley proceeds to tell of private White House "lunches" between the singer and his admirer; and those quotation marks have become the most controversial typography in recent memory. Some pundits have complained that the item is unsubstantiated titillation. I agree that the case is not clinched (though Kelley's portrait of Nancy Reagan hardly stands or falls on this indelicate detail). In *The Washington Post*, Richard Cohen argued piously that the private lives of public figures should only be written about when it is "unavoidable." Thus, "Presidents should not sleep with women connected with the Mafia." Well, exactly. Why is an unprecedentedly powerful First Lady's close, flirtatious relationship, sex or no sex, with a singer with Mafia connections significantly less newsworthy than John Kennedy's relationship with Sam Giancana's Judith Exner? Both Nancy Reagan and John Kennedy shared confidences with their Mafia-connected friends, and both used them for White House business.

It was in *My Way*, her unauthorized

biography of Frank Sinatra, and a brave and careful book, that Kelley established the link between Nancy's singing friend and the mob. The praise that Kelley won for *My Way* was deserved; and by the standards of that book its successor is a disappointment. Many of Kelley's anecdotes about Nancy Reagan seem skewed and open to challenge. She might have written more about Mrs. Reagan's positive points: her political shrewdness, her utility as a hatchetwoman for her personable husband, her tempering of some of his more Neanderthal tendencies. And she might have written more than only anecdotally. She might have aspired, for example, to a more complete psychological portrait, and explained the vast insecurities and even vaster ambitions that made Nancy Reagan measure the whole world solely according to her own and her husband's appearances.

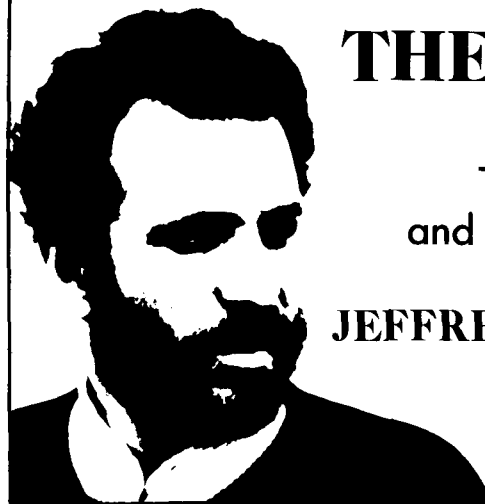
In his comprehensive new book on Reagan (also published by Simon & Schuster, which should win some sort of prize for Reagan-profiteering), Lou Cannon takes a more sympathetic view of the former First Lady (to whom he was given access). "The popular impression," he writes, "is that the Reagans are so close that they drive everyone else out, even the children. That may be unfair to Nancy Reagan. Her presence gives others an

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excuse for not being able to get beyond a barrier that was built long before she came into his life." And she *did* send a letter to Kitty Dukakis when she revealed her problems with drugs and alcohol; and she *did* drop a note to a Washington reporter who learned that she had breast cancer, and even gave her a scoop; and she *was* kind to the beleaguered Quayles when they arrived in Washington.

After a decade of watching this woman, I will concede that there aren't too many other such examples of kindness displayed outside of the context of a public relations campaign. Still, balance would have strengthened Kelley's picture, not weakened it. Of course part of the vitriolic reaction to Kelley's book originates not in sympathy for Nancy Reagan, but in, well, embarrassment. For the trouble with Ronald and Nancy Rea-

gan between 1980 and 1988 was there for all with eyes to see. Kelley's book is rudely reminding many people that they preferred to avert their gaze. It is a taxing book, I imagine, for the people who praised the Reagans or covered them, who were complicitous with the hype and the illusion, with the condition that Garry Wills called the country's "collective suspension of disbelief." It is not pleasant, after all, to look back at that materialism and elitism and remember that we called it virtue and style. The American people twice demanded overwhelmingly that the Reagans inhabit the White House; and this is a free country. But in a free country you not only get Nancy Reagan, you also get Kitty Kelley.

MAUREEN DOWD covers the White House for *The New York Times*.

representation. De Klerk's recent call for repeal of the Population Registration Act of 1950 (which defines the racial categories) implies that he has given up the idea of checks and balances based on statutory racial distinctions.

Horowitz's book is an effort to establish guidelines for these negotiations that will contribute to what he considers a democratic result. Horowitz is a distinguished American political scientist who has specialized in the politics of ethnic division in Third World societies. His magnum opus, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (1985), argued strongly against Marxist or economic interpretations of communal struggles in countries like Malaysia and Sri Lanka, and chided other analysts for not giving ethnicity itself a bedrock significance. In turning his attention to South Africa, he confronts a body of interpretive literature that has played down ethnicity for its own peculiar reasons. The defense of apartheid has been based on the essentializing of race and ethnicity, and its opponents have regarded serious efforts to take account of ascriptive loyalties and identities as concessions to the enemy.

Although Horowitz has no theoretical or ideological objection to the explicit recognition of ethnic groups in the constitutional arrangements of "divided societies," he acknowledges that history has made such an approach unworkable in the South African case. He rightly assumes that no solution can be acceptable to the black majority (and to world opinion) that makes race or ethnicity a legal basis for representation and the sharing of power. Still, in his role as constitutional engineer providing advice on how to establish a liberal democracy in South Africa, he identifies ethnic divisions, including "tribal" divisions among Africans, as the main obstacle to a democratic future. His recommendations are essentially devices for containing or neutralizing the hostility and the hegemonic ambitions of racial and ethnic groups.

Horowitz's orientation may appear to run counter to the current tendency of historians and social scientists to regard ethnicity as "a human construct, a social product." But in fact he accepts such a view of how racial or ethnic groups emerge and argues rather that

it is a conceptual mistake to leap from an understanding of ethnicity as a construct to a conclusion that ethnicity is politically insignificant. In many parts of Africa, there are ethnic groups whose identity can be traced to official policies, missionary categorizations, and encounters with neighboring groups. These "artificial" creations are often significant actors.

Rights and Wrongs

BY GEORGE M. FREDRICKSON

A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society by Donald L. Horowitz

(University of California Press, 312 pp., \$24.95)

President F. W. de Klerk's recent proposal to repeal the Natives' Land Act of 1913 strikes at the heart of the apartheid system in South Africa by opening up the entire country to black landownership and permanent settlement. But it does not alter the fact that decades of discriminatory legislation have impoverished the black majority and left the white minority in secure possession of most of South Africa's land, wealth, and productive resources. At this point de Klerk does not even propose to nullify the "removals" of the 1980s, which forced blacks off land in "white areas" that they had, in some cases, occupied for a century or more. As South Africa begins "talks about talks" on a new constitution to replace the essentially whites-only document of 1908, the hidden issue is how to rectify the legacy of economic inequality left by a long history of government-enforced racial discrimination.

The overt issue, and the issue on which Donald L. Horowitz focuses our attention in his important new book, is how to broaden the suffrage to include blacks while at the same time giving the white minority whatever protection it needs or

deserves against discrimination or oppression by a newly empowered African majority. (The issue of how to distinguish the denial of democratic rights to whites from legitimate actions to compensate blacks for past injustices does not exercise him.) On the immediate constitutional issue, the positions of the two principal bargainers seem clear-cut, and they are difficult to reconcile. The African National Congress calls for one person, one vote in a Westminster-type parliamentary system based on plurality elections—a democratized version of the same system that has enabled the Nationalist party to dominate South Africa since 1948. In the ANC view, minorities can be shielded from majority tyranny by a bill of rights guaranteeing to individuals the kind of civil liberties that are set forth in the first ten amendments of the United States Constitution.

The government, on the other hand, has advocated some form of group representation that would in effect provide ethnic or racial minorities with a veto over majority decisions. But the government seems to be giving ground, and it is apparently searching for a formula that would give whites a de facto minority veto without specifying race as a basis for

While undoubtedly true, such a general statement does not answer the question of how much political-economic reinforcement ethnicity requires on a continuous basis in order to retain its power.

Horowitz's proposals and guidelines for a democratic South Africa are premised on the belief that "black majority rule," which is the aim of many anti-apartheid activists, does not constitute democracy. He points to several governments in Africa and throughout the Third World in which a majority ethnic group has formed itself into a political party and was then able to rule in perpetuity even under a relatively open system of periodic elections. True democracy, Horowitz argues, means that the "outs" have a possibility of becoming the "ins," and he anticipates that South Africa will become at best a de facto one-party state like Senegal or Botswana if the ANC comes to power under a constitution that does not put special checks on the power of the majority.

After criticizing previous schemes for diluting or curbing the will of the majority in South Africa as undemocratic or unrealistic, Horowitz offers the broad outlines of what he considers a satisfactory solution. Particularly crucial in his view is the abandonment of the Anglo-American system of plurality or "first-past-the-post" elections for legislative seats, which tend to inflate the power of the largest party. He advocates the substitution of a form of voting that will require absolute majorities and, in many instances, the pooling of votes by two or more parties. His preferred scheme is "Alternative Voting," which requires the voter to mark second and third preferences, so that if one candidate fails to win a majority, the victor is determined by adding to his total the alternative preferences of other voters until the candidate most acceptable—or least unacceptable—to a clear majority of voters emerges. For this system to bring about the desired result of the pooling of votes among ethnically based parties, relatively large multimember constituencies will be required because of the high degree of residential segregation in South Africa. Horowitz acknowledges that this will make for a devilishly complicated ballot, but he feels that complexity is a small price to pay for the built-in incentives for intergroup political accommodation that this scheme will allegedly provide.

His other two significant suggestions are for a strong, separately elected president, and for a change from a unitary state to a federal system. The president would be chosen under the terms of another complex electoral formula designed to make him a conciliator and

consensus-builder rather than the agent of a single political party or ethnic group. He points to the Nigerian presidency, which makes election depend on a minimum level of support in all the provinces of the nation.

Horowitz does not spell out the details of what such a special set of presidential election requirements would look like in South Africa, but it appears to be tied in with his call for federalism. To dissociate his advocacy of a federal system from the various schemes for an ethnic "consociation" or confederation in South Africa, he takes the American states as his model, rather than the Swiss cantons; and he makes it clear that the units to be created and empowered should not be the result of racial or ethnic gerrymandering. Presumably none would have a white majority, and all (except the Western Cape, if it were to be made a separate jurisdiction) would have an African plurality. The object would not be group autonomy, but rather to reduce somewhat the importance of what happens at the center, and to diffuse ethnic competition and tension throughout the system rather than focus it at the core of a unity state. Alternative voting, a consensus presidency, and federalism would, taken together, create strong incentives for politicians to bargain across racial and ethnic lines and to restrict their hegemonic ambitions. Pluralist democracy, Horowitz concludes, would have a good chance under such arrangements; without them, or something like them, it would surely be doomed.

Horowitz is less than optimistic about the prospects that a constitution embodying such safeguards against majority tyranny will be agreed upon. Improbable, but not impossible, is his estimate of the chances. The main obstacle in his view is the likely resistance of the ANC, which will be loath to surrender its self-serving commitment to a simple system of one person, one vote and first-past-the-post elections in a unitary state. Since such a system is likely to lead to ANC hegemony, it is hard to imagine why its leaders would be willing to give it up. The only hope for the acceptance of his proposals, according to Horowitz, is that the threat from the far left of radical Africanist or Black Consciousness groups opposed to any accommodation with whites, and from the far right of diehard white supremacists opposed to any sharing of power with Africans, will drive the ANC and the ruling Nationalist party into a de facto coalition of the center; and within that coalition deals will have to be made. It is hard, of course, to imagine a united front of former oppressors and ex-revolutionaries, but stranger things have

happened in politics. Not often, though.

This is a valuable book that should not be overlooked by anyone concerned with the future of South Africa. Nobody but Horowitz could have provided so many apt comparisons with other ethnically divided societies. And it is high time that people thinking and writing about South Africa faced up to the enduring significance of ethnicity (including ethnicity based on race). The human tendency to affirm identities based on descent or ascription rather than those based on class or achievement does not disappear in industrial, urban settings, as predicted by progressive, evolutionary theories of modernization (liberal or Marxist).

Horowitz is among the leaders of a small group of social scientists who focus squarely on race and ethnicity, and thus perform the invaluable function of reminding us of this reality and inviting us to think seriously about it. As an applied theorist or "engineer," he does more than provide ideal solutions for abstract problems. He shows an admirable sensitivity to the specificities and the peculiarities of the South African problem, and the discourse that surrounds it. It is to be hoped that those actually negotiating South Africa's constitutional future will read this book and reflect on it.

But the future of South Africa—what it should be, what it is likely to be—is a contentious subject, and it is unlikely that Horowitz will find a single informed commentator who will agree completely with his analysis, or with the speculations to which it gives rise. I was disappointed, as a historian, by the cursory attention to South African history, and to the likely effect of cultural and ideological traditions on the negotiating process. And some of the historical references included are inaccurate or misleading. It is not true, as Horowitz twice alleges, that the ANC once proposed the partition of South Africa into black and white areas. A closer reading of his own source reveals that this was always a "second-best" solution, raised at times as a debating point to embarrass white segregationists. ("You want segregation? Offer us half of the country, and we might consider it.") Since its founding in 1912, the official aim of the ANC has been a common society with equal rights for all. Horowitz also refers mysteriously to a "Xhosa uprising" in 1920. He is referring, I suppose, to an incident in 1921 in which a millennialist sect squatted on land to which it had no legal claim, refused a government order to depart, and was then massacred by government forces.

But these are small matters. Of greater significance is Horowitz's utter disregard of what most historians consider the

great dynamic force of twentieth-century South African history: the growth of industrial capitalism. While scarcely the solvent of racial and ethnic loyalties that some theorists expected it to be, capitalism surely had an effect on the nature of ethnicity, and on its relationship to other social formations in South Africa. Since social class, in Horowitz's view, cannot be of great political significance in "divided societies," he has no hesitation in drawing lessons about the politics of ethnicity from societies that have not undergone, or have not undergone to nearly the same extent, the transformation to capitalist industrialization that in South Africa has turned so many Africans from peasants into industrial workers or members of an urban poverty class. Giving no comparative weight to "class" and economic development is as questionable a way of proceeding as the tendency of Marxists to say that nothing else is important.

What difference does it make for the prospects of liberal democracy in South Africa that it is an advanced capitalist country that industrialized through the exploitation of underpaid, coerced, and disfranchised black workers? It certainly does not make race and ethnicity irrelevant. But the mass of evidence that Horowitz presents on the ethnic attitudes of

urban Africans shows unmistakably that urban residence does make a difference. In Soweto, tribal loyalties among Africans become attenuated and there is a high rate of intermarriage.

I wonder also whether Horowitz's analysis of the striking differences between the attitudes of Zulus and Xhosas can be attributed simply to the fact that these are two distinct ethnic groups. It seems to me that Zulu nationalism is buttressed by the limited or recent exposure of many Zulus to township or urban life, while the non-racialist or Pan-Africanist tendencies of the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape are related to a longer and more intense exposure to urban life and modern capitalist economic conditions. Notice how the newspapers describe the recent "ethnic strife" between Xhosas and Zulus in the townships near Johannesburg. It is between Zulu hostel-dwellers (migrant laborers who have families in rural KwaZulu) and Xhosa township residents.

Surely an analysis that emphasizes only ethnic group designations and ignores real differences in socioeconomic circumstances and the extent to which inter-group acculturation has occurred is incomplete or skewed. The "detrribalization" of urban Africans may have been exaggerated by some believers in unilinear modernization, but it has occurred to a considerable extent, and certainly to a greater extent than in the Third World countries that Horowitz compares with South Africa.

It is from urbanized Africans, a large proportion of whom happen to be Xhosa, and not from Xhosa ethnicity as such, that the ANC draws the bulk of its support, as do the Black Consciousness or Pan-Africanist groups. Out of the urban crucible, new identities, racial or non-racial, are formed; and older allegiances to a culturally defined ethnicity become weaker. The volatility and the variability of urban African opinion on the "race/class issue" are a result of the fact that in urban, industrialized South Africa race and class lines coincide to a remarkable degree, raising in the minds of many Africans the question of which is more essential in defining their identity and predicament, the color of their skins or their work experience and sources of income.

The greatest obstacle to the achievement of liberal democracy in South Africa, I think, is not ethnic diversity among Af-

ricans, but the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of satisfying the economic and psychological expectations of urban Africans by opening up the electoral system without at the same time empowering representatives of the African majority to address the problem of economic inequality through means that go beyond what is generally acceptable in capitalist democracies. Although Horowitz takes account of economic inequality and recognizes that it is a serious problem, he does not give it the weight it deserves. He apparently understates the statistical gap between whites and Africans, stating that the ratio of white to African per capita earnings was 3.5 to 1 in 1986, although an authoritative study from 1990 that he himself cites (Stephen R. Lewis, *The Economics of Apartheid*, makes it 8.9 to 1 in 1985. Lack of appreciation of the depth and the seriousness of black poverty may help to account for his questionable assumption that a moderate government that fails to come up with a way to relieve black destitution in a relatively short time can keep the support of the masses.

The problem of economic deprivation among blacks as set forth so graphically in the recent study *Uprooting Poverty*, by Frances Wilson and Mamphela Ramphele, has serious implications for the constitution-making process. The ANC now appears to recognize that radical socialist solutions, such as massive nationalization and confiscation of white-owned land and corporations, will not work, if only because such policies would discourage the investment of foreign capital that South Africa will badly need in the future. But if the ANC wishes to retain the loyalty of a majority of blacks, a government in which the ANC participates will need the constitutional ability to implement a centrally coordinated and rather expensive welfare state, including a national health service, vastly improved black schools, a comprehensive system of social security and some form of subsidization of black landowning. It will be able to pay for such a program only through a massive increase in taxes on white incomes, property, and businesses. But Horowitz's proposed system of checks and balances would make such reforms difficult, if not impossible, to implement. For reasons that go beyond the simple party self-interest that Horowitz invokes to explain ANC ambitions, the Congress is unlikely to settle for less than a constitutional system that would hold out the promise of its becoming the government. It will not accept checks on majority rule that make this impossible, because of ideology as well as political expediency.

Landscape With a Book Falling In a Sea

When the novel began, the continent shifted
began turning, began sinking, began.
There was a dark boat on dark water,
an uncharted trip. And the moonlight
moved beneath the ice. And the sunlight
shone inside the boat. And a writer
sat high on a cliff. And the book
in her hands became stones falling
in a sea, crumbling beneath her feet.
And the stones became pews,
moss-covered seats, that she tried to climb
over, turn over. And the seats
became velvet ribboning past fallen cities,
seaweed unraveling in glass,
Italian glass where letters are rising now
like bubbles of fish,
where water is rippling with words
she is sending; they tangle
in nets abandoned on a shore. And her hand
is like the cobra's neck, thickening
before it strikes, the wave cresting
before it breaks, turning the book over
to begin again.

LINDA NOWLIN

Does this mean that the prospects for liberal democracy in South Africa are even dimmer than Horowitz supposes? Yes, they probably are, if we define liberal democracy as an exact replica of what exists in Britain or the United States. It is at least arguable that the social and economic problems of South African blacks cannot be addressed effectively through such a system in its normal mode of operation, although its crisis mode—how it operates in time of major war or catastrophic depression—might offer some useful lessons. If liberal democracy means entrenched free market capitalism with periodic free elections among parties that share a commitment to the economic and social status quo, it is unlikely to take root in South Africa.

But if our conception of democracy is more flexible and relativistic, there is some chance of a democratic future for South Africa. A political system with one dominant party that protects civil liberties, allows for democratic decision-making within its own ranks, and at least opens the possibility for the formation of a competitive opposition has much to recommend it, especially at times when a society's survival depends on decisive and radical action from the center. Horowitz points to Botswana, Senegal, and Namibia as African countries with dominant party democracies of this kind. One might also point to the United States between 1804 and 1824, that forgotten era when the National Republicans had no competition on the federal level.

I question Horowitz's assumption, moreover, that the ANC is an ethnic party, and that its dominance would be the equivalent of black dominance over whites or Xhosa dominance over other Africans. Maybe I am naive, but I take the ANC leadership seriously when it describes itself as a "non-racial" organization, and I see more than tokenism in its advancement of whites, Indians, and Coloreds into positions of prominence. For quite understandable historical reasons, Xhosa speakers predominate in leadership positions, but support is strong from all African ethnic groups. The ANC is supported by a substantial and growing minority of Zulus. Remember that the "ethnic" conflicts in Natal have been between Zulus loyal to Inkatha and those who have supported the pro-ANC United Democratic Front.

In the end, therefore, I do not believe that Horowitz's ethnicity paradigm is the best way to understand South Africa, nor do I believe that the aim of constitution-making should be primarily or exclusively to protect ethnic minorities. That is a laudable aim, and also a necessity if rep-

resentatives of the white minority are expected to assent to the settlement. But it is also essential to empower the majority, not for the purpose of oppressing other groups (safeguards against that possibility can be provided), but for the purpose of acting decisively to rectify some of the injustices and the inequalities be-

queathed to South Africa by more than a century of white minority domination.

GEORGE M. FREDRICKSON is Robinson Professor of History at Stanford University and the author of *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (Oxford University Press).

Cop Opera

BY LUC SANTE

Widows: An 87th Precinct Novel by Ed McBain

(William Morrow, 336 pp., \$18.95)

Since 1956 Ed McBain has written forty-three novels set in and concerning the Eighty-Seventh Precinct of the city of Isola, in the process redefining the genre-within-a-genre known as the police procedural. McBain, whose real name is Evan Hunter, whose name at birth in turn was Salvatore Lombino, begins each novel the same way, with a disclaimer that reads: "The city in these pages is imaginary. The people, the places are all fictitious. Only the police routine is based on established investigatory technique."

The notice is slightly disingenuous; Isola, an island city balanced between the rivers Harb and Dix and surrounded by its outer boroughs Riverhead, Calm's Point, Majesta, and Bethtown, is a Manhattan tilted and reshuffled just a bit, sharing diverse peculiarities with its model, including various plot-affecting bits of legal arcana. Those familiar with Manhattan can enjoy playing the à clef game: Dallas Street corresponds to Houston Street, Jefferson Avenue resembles Madison Avenue, the Quarter is not a million miles from the Village, and so on. There seems little reason for this charade beyond avoiding imputations of libel when the imaginary events in the books echo or foreshadow real events, which is always a matter for concern whenever the naked city of 8 million stories is the model.

The gimmick that originally distinguished the series from its many rivals in the *policier* world was its collective hero. The hero is the squad room. McBain populated his squad room with a bomber crew of types, among whom point-of-view chores could be rotated. The men of the Eighty-Seventh have not changed or aged over the past thirty-five years. Al-

though the cultural and sociological details in each succeeding book match those of the year of its execution, the dramatis personae have remained the same people at the same point in their lives. Most of them are in early middle age. All but the chief are detectives. Meyer Meyer is Jewish, Arthur Brown is black, Cotton Hawes is handsome, Hal Willis is short, Andy Parker is a slob, Bert Kling is the youngest, Peter Byrnes is the lieutenant, Steve Carella is the author's stand-in.

These attributes supply a good deal of the characters' off-duty motivations and emotional responses. Withal they are first and foremost cops. The dynamic of the series is steady-state; much as in a television series, the characters undergo major traumatic experiences that may be recalled in later installments and even account for recurring phobias or prejudices, but they do not actually grow, any more than they age. They have their dramatic functions, and they carry them out in as workmanlike and consistent a fashion as they perform their professional duties. Since Bert Kling is the youngest, for example, part of his task is to search for a lasting relationship with a woman and fail in his attempts; consequently, devoted readers have followed Kling through dozens of troubled liaisons, their details varying but their outcomes the same.

The comparison to a TV series is not idle. Aside from having formed the basis for a short-lived cop show in the early 1960s, the Eighty-Seventh Precinct concept begat numerous multicharacter big-city stationhouse sagas, from "Barney Miller" to "Cop Rock." In fact, McBain was turning out something very much like "Hill Street Blues" long before that show went on the air, and even that se-

ries' vaunted roman-fleuve structure of parallel plots entwined but not always linked was a feature of the Eighty-Seventh Precinct novels early on. But then, literary serial manufacture established the premises for its younger equivalents in the electronic media; consistency and familiarity are the cornerstones of each. Consumers know what to expect, and they would feel betrayed if the formula were breached. In McBain's novels, such surprise as exists in the plot is factored in, a cadenza passage—after three or four books the reader knows for certain that the murderer will turn out to be a minor walk-on character casually introduced approximately one-third of the way through.

A serial work has only one primary engine: its own perpetuation. This makes the individual stories and themes subject to a certain trivialization. No matter how compelling the predicament, it will be neatly wrapped up within the installment's confines, and no matter how serious and provocative the theme, it will always be subordinate to the series' establishing premise, which functions as an unyielding status quo. No foreign consideration can get more than a cursory exposition, and no contrary idea stands a chance. McBain's novels have been growing longer in the last decade or so, and

more thematically ambitious. The monolithic single-word titles that have marked nearly all the more recent installments tend to announce a metaphor that will pervade, however loosely, the two or three streams of plot in each book.

In the latest, *Widows*, the central story is, as always, the mystery: someone murders a younger woman who all evidence suggests was being kept by an older man. Before the detectives have had a chance to track down this party, however, he turns up slain as well, and before long his wife is likewise killed, and the carnage may continue through his entire female line. In the second story line, Carella's father has been murdered in a clumsy robbery at his bakery in an Italian neighborhood in Riverhead (the series' substitute for the Bronx), and Carella must comfort his mother, quell his own anger, and force himself to stand aside as the Riverhead cops (who are black) track down the killer (who is also black). The third story concerns Detective Eileen Burke, who in an earlier installment suffered the usual doomed affair with Bert Kling, in the course of which she underwent a scarring episode while on undercover detail. Now, on the advice of a departmental psychotherapist, she is trying out for a place on the hostage-negotiation squad, a difficult assignment that will deliver her from

the necessity of killing in the line of duty

Burke is one of several women cops who have been recurring in recent volumes. McBain must have realized, or been made aware of, his series' male bias and he has been giving more room to female characters, including villains, as well as assembling memorable vignettes of same from past books in two collections *McBain's Ladies: The Women of the 87th Precinct* and *McBain's Ladies Too*. In general the Eighty-Seventh Precinct worldview is liberal in an unreconstructed Kennedy administration sense. Meyer and Brown demonstrate the stationhouse's social integration, at least by pre-Rainbow Coalition standards, and the murderers more often than not turn out to be white and middle class, solid citizens who in most cases could plead temporary insanity at their trials (which never occur in the novels). The cops are all detectives—managerial sorts, really, not blues subject to the pressures and horrors of the beat—and they are all reflective and morally challenged at appropriate intervals (except Parker, the token reactionary, who has been getting less work lately). They all feel rage at the senselessness of murder and despair at bleak social conditions and whenever they feel tempted to let their emotions get the better of them and the law, respect for order and professional restraint persuade them to calm down.

While it may be said that mere entertainments are under no obligation to confront the loaded issues of the day, such a thing is simply not possible in the mine-field terrain of inner-city crime drama. Racism, sexism, economic inequality are ingrained in the topic, and to ignore them would be to treat them derisively. On the other hand to take them on fully is to risk a great deal, especially within the enveloping context of a series. The major characters cannot be challenged very deeply without risking their moral authority and, by extension, the stability of the narrative machine that will engender future installments.

It is not too remote a possibility to consider, for example, that a book or two hence McBain will take on the subject of police brutality, which has recently been reprinted on everyone's mind by the King and Pereira incidents. When and if this does occur, the cops involved in the beating will not be any of the series' regulars, but supernumeraries imported for the occasion, into whose minds and hearts the novel will penetrate only superficially. Our heroes will come in to set things straight, and to ponder briefly the terrible paradoxes of law enforcement. The subject will have been addressed, in short, without offending anybody. Such

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peculation may seem unfair, but it merely reflects the laws by which the series and its various counterparts are governed.

In the instance of *Widows*, there is very little toying with the titular metaphor, but it implicitly stretches to include Burke along with Carella's mother and the dead philanderer's wife and ex-wife. Burke was forced into having to gun down a pimp in an earlier installment as a result of the well-meant but obfuscatory actions of Kling, and the episode broke them apart. Now she is attempting to regain her self-confidence without male assistance. The situation is complex: the killing was made especially traumatic by the fact that it revived the memory of a yet earlier incident, when she had been raped while undercover. Kling is to blame not so much for his clumsiness as for the paternalistic impulse that led him to meddle with her case to begin with. She went into the confrontation possessed of a rage that was extraprofessional, and therefore guilt-inducing. As her psychotherapist sums up the matter:

"Yes," Karin said. "She wanted to kill him. Even though he wasn't the man she really wanted to kill. The man she really wanted to kill was the man who'd raped her and cut her, and who—I say 'unfortunately' again—looked somewhat like you [Kling]. If it weren't for the blond rapist, she wouldn't have to kill this man. If it weren't for you. . . ."

McBain does not insult his characters or their predicaments, he merely packages them. It's just like life, really, only . . . Only that Burke is put through the wringer and comes out at the end of the book battered but hopeful, while Kling is just momentarily thrown off-balance. Burke can be allowed extreme vulnerability and the possibility of failure because she is not a member of the club. The men of the Eighty-Seventh get shaken up, but their resilience is never in doubt. Likewise, Carella is driven to anger and to misty flashbacks by the murder of his father, but the reader just knows he won't do anything stupid or impulsive as a consequence. He needs to be intact for the next installment. Thus the narrative engine mirrors the self-perpetuating codes that pervade such institutions as police departments. This might be called an example of reification.

And what of the title, anyway? The widowhood trope is never pursued, it merely hangs there on a shingle. The philanderer's wife and ex-wife are little more than vignettes, and Carella's mother is less than that: a sentimental invocation and no more. So the burden of widowhood is inescapably conferred upon Burke. Whatever the dialogue may convey about

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Israel and the Media

Are current events in Israel getting fair coverage?

In December of 1987, an Israeli civilian was stabbed by Arabs in the Gaza territory, administered by Israel. On the following day, four Gaza Arabs were killed by an automobile driven by an Israeli. The two events were totally unrelated. Yet, the rumor spread that the Arab deaths were revenge murders by the Israelis. Rioting broke out and spread into Judea-Sumaria (the "West Bank"), also administered by Israel. It was the beginning of the "intifada," which still goes on. The media have covered and continue to cover this uprising extensively. Are they doing it fairly?

What are the facts?

■ The conflict between the Israeli government and the Arabs in the areas administered by Israel, the so-called "intifada," is essentially a minor regional one. It does not compare in scope, in violence and in the number of people killed or injured to the many other conflicts going on in the world right at this time, such as the conflict between the Basques and Spain; between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland; and between Moslems, Hindus and Sikhs in India. And there are many more. Just as with the Arab-Israel conflict, no easy or early solution seems at hand.

■ Yet, while the "intifada" is only one of many regional conflicts, the volume of its coverage in the media has made it appear to be a major world event. There are over 250 press and t.v. reporters accredited in Israel, a tiny country the size of New Jersey and with only half the population of New Jersey. This large media contingent is second only in number to that of Washington and Moscow—and less than that of such key news centers as London, Paris, Bonn, New Delhi, Peking or Tokyo. Naturally, all of these reporters must produce daily stories in order to justify their presence. This results in much journalistic overkill. The *Washington Post*, for instance, reports in an internal audit that . . . during a 5-month period in 1988, they published over 300,000 words on the "intifada," more than two articles daily, one-quarter of which appeared on the front page. That was the most intense coverage by the *Post* of any continuing story. In contrast, when in one day, 65 Shi'ites were killed in one of the brotherly battles in neighboring Lebanon, the *Post* gave that only 600 words, in an article on page 15.

■ But it isn't just the intensity of coverage that casts serious doubt about the fairness of the media. It's primarily the slant that is being given to the news, both in the print media and on television. Television, especially, thrives on "action bites," short dramatic scenes with potential to get the viewer involved. For instance, we see over and over again pictures of

teenage boys throwing rocks at Israel soldiers, and the soldiers chasing those teenagers with guns and clubs. That inevitably creates the impression of Israel as the bully or the Goliath, and of the "Palestinians" as defenseless Davids. The opposite is true, of course. Israel is a beleaguered country surrounded by implacable enemies, who incessantly plot its destruction. The "intifada" is part of that never-ending war. ■ The media do not show the hundreds of Israeli soldiers and civilians who have been grievously wounded and in some cases killed by rocks and gasoline bombs. They do not show the Arabs setting countless arson fires, in which over 25,000 acres of forest—every tree having lovingly been planted by hand—have been destroyed. They do not show the attacks on Jewish farms, the wanton destruction of industrial and public service facilities, the fire bombing of hundreds of buses, and the ruthless killing of livestock. They do not show the PLO terror aimed at the "Palestinians" themselves. In the last seventeen months of the "intifada" dozens of Palestinian Arabs have been murdered by the PLO, hundreds injured, many critically. This campaign of intimidation has increased since Yasir Arafat allegedly renounced terrorism.

■ In the few cases in which fuller coverage of the conflict was attempted on t.v., such coverage usually did turn out to be more "show-biz" than serious reporting. ABC's reportage "Six Days Plus Twenty Years" was so blatantly anti-Israel in tone that Arab countries rushed to use it as a propaganda film. Peter Jennings on ABC insistently perpetuates the odious comparison of Israel with South Africa. TV interviews with people in the territories invariably show reasonably middle class intellectuals and professionals with whom the American viewer can identify—never the arsonists, the bus bombers and the throwers of Molotov cocktails. The occasional Israeli spokesman that gets trotted out is almost always a member of the radical left or of the so-called "Peace Now" movement, quite unrepresentative of mainline Israeli thinking.

The media do not give the "intifada" fair coverage. It's partly the sheer volume of the coverage, which gives this minor regional conflict perceived importance that it doesn't have. It also lies in the persistent anti-Israel slant that permeates the reporting in all media. Finally, the media, almost without exception, focus on the immediate "drama" and do not explore the history and background of this conflict. The most important point, always omitted, is that the conflict between Israel and the "Palestinians" is not the core problem in the area. The core problem is the unremitting obsession of the Arab states to destroy Israel, their refusal to make peace with it, or to lift the economic boycott against Israel—regardless of what disposition may ultimately be made of the "West Bank." Israel, more even than other beleaguered pro-Western nations, is the target of disinformation and unfair reporting. Largely because it is a dependable friend and ally of the United States, the Jewish state is another victim of the "blame America first" bias in the media.

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her self-determination is colored by the nearly subliminal effect of the title. Burke's troubles, it suggests, are the result of her being without a man. Of the three storylines, Burke's tale is far and away the most memorable—the mystery is a silly pile of red herrings and the story of Carella's father's death is mostly a set-up for a plot twist—so that it cannot escape the title's broad strokes, whether such was McBain's conscious intention or not.

The effect that the Eighty-Seventh Precinct series has upon its readers, much like the effect of "Hill Street Blues" and related phenomena upon their viewers, is more than just a matter of fleeting diversion. The multicharacter, multiplot constructions of these cop sagas not only make vehicles for the kind of all-around entertainment that movies used to pro-

vide but seldom do anymore—you get bathos here, comedy there, a bit of folk wisdom, some armchair psychology, some romantic byplay, maybe a song-and-dance routine. Their apparently *collagiste* approach also seems consistent with the improbable juxtapositions of urban life. A scrim of faux indeterminacy cloaks a rigidly determined structure. The messes of real life are displayed and then blanketed; bombs go off, but under the eye of the bomb squad. The precinct will always endure, unscathed. The series is more than just a tale of police detectives; it is, in its way, a traffic cop of urban chaos.

LUC SANTE is the author of *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York*, to be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in September.

satisfying life, the account of such an establishment scholar's days (a confirmed bachelor to boot, and a loner) must perforce be an account, page after page, of what he wrote and how he believed he performed in his various official positions. It is not exactly riveting, except for those who occupy the same corner of the privileged world in which he moved.

Pope-Hennessy was born in 1913 into a distinguished Anglo-Irish Catholic family. His grandfather (and namesake) was a colonial administrator and member of Parliament. His father was a major-general who married the remarkably brilliant and well-educated Una Birch, a friend of W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, with various ties to the Bloomsbury set. As Dame Una Pope-Hennessy, she became one of the brilliant female intellectuals of London life before the Second World War and the author of many books, notably biographies, some of which are still standard literature on their subjects. It was his formidable mother who ordained the shape of Pope-Hennessy's fortunate development from early childhood, when he called her "Mummy Tiger" in the nursery, to her death in 1949, when he was still living with her.

James Pope-Hennessy, his younger brother, as irresponsible and disorganized as John was disciplined and upright, was a constant source of concern although the two were at times very close. James followed in Dame Una's footsteps as a British establishment biographer and essayist and wrote the official biography of Queen Mary. John's account of his affection for James and his reaction to the particularly brutal murder that ended his life in 1972 are among the best pages in his book.

Of course, as preparation for a notable career in art history, Pope-Hennessy's generation and class affiliation posed some special advantages as well as severe obstacles. "The Pope" is perhaps the last English-born art historian who received a "classical" education in the true sense of the word. At Eton and later at Oxford he was fluent in Latin and competent in Greek. By virtue of his family's wide culture and travels, he learned the standard modern European languages. After Oxford, he embarked on his own *Wanderjahr* across Europe, armed with prestigious introductions to just about every one who counted. He immersed himself in private collections, museums, cathedrals, and libraries, an experience that laid the foundations of his life's work. At Oxford, however, there was no recognizable academic discipline called art history; and so he read "History." He is, in fact, virtually self-educated in his field.

The Educated Eye

By E. V. THAW

Learning to Look: My Life in Art by John Pope-Hennessy

(Doubleday, 336 pp., \$27.50)

In the introduction to his superb book on Cellini, published in 1985, John Pope-Hennessy quotes his sixteenth-century subject as follows: "All men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything exceptional, or which may properly be deemed exceptional, ought, if they are persons of truth and honesty, to describe their life with their own hand." By that authority, "the Pope," as he is widely referred to by friends and colleagues in the art world, is clearly qualified to write an autobiography, since he certainly has done much that is exceptional.

Still, I wish he hadn't. His scholarship is vast, and his voluminous production of books and articles is the work of an authority greater than any art historian writing in English in this century; but the man, the personality revealed in this autobiography, is far less than the full story. Anything Pope-Hennessy writes is of interest, but this book seems a hasty patchwork of recollections and opinions that smooth over as much as they reveal.

"The Pope" is a very great man in his field, but the reason for his nickname has more to do with his habit of making pronouncements that brook no disagreement or even discussion. This book

is full of them. Its pages convey the awesome authority and sometimes the prejudices of the man, but not his great warmth and humor. For some reason, his pen is unable to capture that side of his character. And about other people, that parade of well-known and influential figures he came to know in his long career, he is curiously bland. To be sure, in a few cases, he settles old scores. But for the most part, although possessed of a famously wicked tongue, "the Pope" writes with disappointing gentleness about most of the passing parade of government ministers, art historians, museum curators, collectors, and trustees whose lives and careers have crossed his own. More justly aimed darts would have been welcome, along with more incisive criticism of current museum governance.

A large part of the book consists of Pope-Hennessy's descriptions of his administrative posts as the director, successively, of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum and as the chairman of European Painting at the Metropolitan Museum. He even goes so far as to insert in his narrative a farewell speech he gave to his staff and an address to a conference on museum policies. While he has had a very full and a very

which means that today he would not normally qualify for an academic post at an American university—an irony he could probably appreciate. (When it was pointed out to the great Elizabethan scholar Kittredge that he did not have a doctorate, he is supposed to have replied, "But who will examine me?")

Before World War II young Pope-Hennessy, a wunderkind among art scholars, published in rapid succession books on Giovanni di Paolo and Sassetta, two major Siennese artists, and established himself as the authority on Siennese quattrocento painting that he has remained to this day. His rarefied, ivory-tower, aesthetic existence was interrupted by the war, when he served at home in the air ministry. It was a rude but not unwelcome shock after his privileged isolation, as he amusingly recounts. Sent to inspect entries along a barbed-wire fence, he remarks that "I had never met ordinary people before (people whose interests did not in some way conform to my own, mean), and to my surprise, I found them congenial and interesting."

He also found congenial and interesting most of the well-known figures in the art world, and in the social and intellectual circles among which he moved so easily, whose interests did conform to his own. Still, it is about some of these people, brilliant in many ways though they were, that Pope-Hennessy's critical judgments of character are not as secure as his connoisseurship among art objects. One can well understand his fascination, especially as a young man, with the overripe atmosphere and the aura of sophisticated learning at Bernard Berenson's villa I Tatti, but upon mature reflection he certainly should have recognized the "mountain of corruption" on which Berenson sat, to recall a phrase of Kenneth Clark's (another of his heroes with a tincture of self-hatred). The self-hating, rather vicious snob and confidence man that Berenson sometimes could be appears nowhere in these pages; he was, apparently, all kindness and helpfulness to the well-connected and socially acceptable young Englishman.

A substantial portion of this book consists of concise, thumbnail accounts of the author's acquaintance or friendship with a long list of the leading art historians of his time. These are mostly complimentary paragraphs that make a weak attempt to bring the person alive on the page and to summarize his or her particular viewpoint. In a few cases, like that of the redoubtable Evelyn Sandberg-Fava, a wonderful Margaret Rutherford-like character in Florence before and after the war, and the great, mysterious Ro-

berto Longhi, Pope-Hennessy's vignettes are resonant. About the controversial English art scholar and collector Douglas Cooper, Pope-Hennessy's use of the Berensonian phrase "life-enhancing" to describe his personality is a curious choice. Most people who have had anything to do with him, friend and foe alike, would find the description "life-threatening" more appropriate. Cooper once physically attacked the director of the Tate and, in the disturbed mental state of his last years, refused to lend any of his Picasso's to MOMA's monumental 1980 show because he was convinced that New York would be destroyed in an atomic attack.

Late in the book, while describing his apprehension as movers set to work packing his possessions prior to departure for a well-earned and comfortable retirement in part of a Florentine palazzo, Pope-Hennessy almost off-handedly remarks: "Objects mean more to me than people. It is not that I am frigid or reclusive, but that object-based relationships are more constant than human ones (they never change their nature and do not pall)." It is probably such greater intimacy with works of art than with people that makes "the Pope" a less compelling writer in his memoir than in his brilliant monographs on great artists, in which he probes the essence of the individual artistic imagination at work in a specific cultural milieu. When he shifted his attention from Early Renaissance painting to the neglected study of sculpture, he single-handedly reformed the field. From the project of cataloging the Victoria and Albert Museum's important collection of Italian sculpture, he went on to produce a three-volume illustrated essay on the whole range of Italian sculptural monuments, which had never before been subjected to such a rational and comprehensive overview.

About museums and their administration, Pope-Hennessy has much to say that is valuable, but not much that is new. He was happy in New York after coping with British bureaucracy and state-controlled arts management. He seems not to question our system of museum ownership and control by private trustees, but he has many sharp words for the creators of the present mess in English museums, particularly his beloved Victoria and Albert, where traditional supervision of the collections by serious scholars has been obliterated in a Thatcherite reorganization. Pope-Hennessy's clearheaded pronouncements, such as his declaration that his "own view had always been that the prime duty of museums was not to educate the public but to assist

them in a process of self-education," make one yearn for a more extended discussion of the philosophy of the modern museum, an institution that sometimes seems to obscure the message of art more than it helps to elucidate it.

For all its flaws, this memoir does give a taste of the extraordinary quality of its author. Indeed, the depth of his commitment to art and his realization of the limitations of the life he describes are best summed up in his statement on the book's very first page:

My life has been devoted to studying works of art and putting them to use. To the material well-being of the world neither activity is of much consequence—it does not make the poor less poor, it does not sustain the hungry, it does not diminish suffering or redress injustice. But works of art have always seemed to me to have a supernatural power, and I believe that visual images constitute a universal language through which the experience of the past is transmitted to the present, and by whose means all lives can be immeasurably enriched. ●

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

Lasch identifies as the guiding spirit behind progress a worthy foundation upon which to build a vital democracy? Is it true that the widespread division of labor that is supposed to make the democratization of consumption possible also degrades people's lives? If Mr. Lasch "detests large corporations, financial institutions, and national and state bureaucracies," as Holmes claims, isn't that because anyone who believes in participatory democracy and in people's ability to run their own lives has to "detest" such obviously anti-democratic agencies that run from the top down? Mr. Holmes's unwillingness to take such questions seriously in the end serves as another example of the way liberals have kept their faith in progress safe.

ROCHELLE GURSTEIN
New York, New York

Race on Campus

To the editors:

In "Race on Campus: A Reader's Forum" (April 15) Nathan Newman says that "Nora Zeal Hurston and Alice Walker have been added to many syllabi." Perhaps such names are on the syllabi at the University of California, Berkeley, but at Goshen College we are reading Zora Neale Hurston.

SHIRLEY H. SHOWALTER
Goshen, Indiana

The writer is chair of the English Department at Goshen College.

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Unwild West

A WHILE AGO I SAW INGMAR Bergman's *Ship to India* at the National Gallery of Art. In the film a son and his father's mistress fall in love. They plan to elope, but then she abruptly decides that she is too impure for him. He goes to sea and she goes mad. Years later he returns for her and they flee Sweden. The last scene shows them on board the ship to India. They embrace; we think she is redeemed. The music swells, the camera pans skyward, and four letters burn their way, as if into a wall in Babylon, into the screen: SLUT. Instead of the usual end-of-the-movie rustling, there was an awkward silence in the audience, an awful one—as if the Lord, incensed at our sympathy for illicit love, had intervened with a bit of film criticism. Then came the laugh of relief: of course, “slut” means “the end” in Swedish.

I FELT A SIMILAR SHOCK THE other day, at another Washington museum. This time the feeling was less awful than awkward. It lasted the time it takes to walk through a new show titled “The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier” at the Museum of American Art. A placard near the entrance proclaims the show's central assumption: “All images of westward expansion . . . somehow justified the process of nation building.” The show's mission is to expose how artists “skillfully conveyed” a vision of the West that deliberately obscured the Indian massacres, the travails of the pioneers, the destruction of the environment.

I'M ALL IN FAVOR OF STIRRING up people's preconceptions about the West, but there is something a little frenzied about this show. “Nineteenth-century images of Native Americans are fictions occasionally based on facts,” we read. And below these words we see what we hope might be an exception, a sketch of George Catlin painting a Mandan Indian in the field. But then we read how “Catlin gestures with his brushes toward the Mandan's heart, delegating to himself the power of resurrecting Indian life.” (That was close: a white painter who almost cared about getting it right.) Any hint of sadness at the Indians' destruction, like Ferdinand Pettrich's sculpture *The Dying Tecumseh* or Valentine Brom-

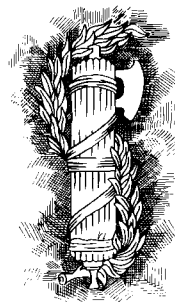
ley's *Crow Indian Burial*, is written off as either “melodrama” or wishful thinking. And the art-historical tendentiousness reaches new depths when we read that “rectilinear frames . . . provide a dramatic demonstration of white power and control.” Would oval frames have signified a weakening of imperialism?

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ART AND propaganda in the representation of the West were not as straightforward as the curators of this show seem to believe. Part of the interest of these pictures is that their subjects often seem at war with their ideological purposes. Take Emanuel Leutze's *The Storming of the Teocalli by Cortez and His Troops*. We're told it “uses the sixteenth-century conquest of Mexico . . . to justify the later [Mexican] war, in which, many Americans argued, a similar ‘despotic’ regime was overthrown.” Indeed, at the lower right of the painting a priest sacrifices a child, proof of Aztec barbarity. But draw a line through the center of the work to the upper left and you see a Spaniard hurling an Aztec child from a parapet. At the bottom left, in the shadows, a Catholic priest offers absolution to a resistant warrior. Draw a line to the upper right and you see Aztec women in prayer, bathed in divine light. The resulting tableau shows, if not the moral equivalence of conquerors and conquered, then at least an ambiguity that the curators have obscured.

AMBIGUITIES AREN'T KEVIN COSTNER's specialty either. *Dances with Wolves* aspired to historical nuance but in the execution merely turned the old red-and-white Manichaeism on its head. This time around, the Indians are the cowboys and the cowboys are the Indians. The transformation is literal: in Costner's film, Lieutenant Dunbar, who can no longer bear his whiteness, becomes an Indian by uttering the words “I Am Dances With Wolves!” If only sins were expiated so easily. Now a debate has broken out over the accuracy of the movie's portrayal of the Pawnee and the Sioux. Richard Grenier, in a recent issue of *Commentary*, argues that the Indians were the savages that whites always thought they were and blames them for not learning how to farm. The sad fact that these commentators omit is that the conquest of the West was so devastating that we know very little about the daily life of nineteenth-century Indians. That anything has survived is a credit to people like Doris Leader Charge, a

teacher on the Rosebud Reservation who gave Costner's cast a crash course in the Lakota that they speak in the film. But when it came to filming the movie's buffalo hunt, Costner was at a loss. He managed to gather eighteen skilled riders from ten different tribes, but none could shoot an arrow from a horse. For weeks they practiced shooting rubber-tipped arrows at moving buffalo and buffalo replicas. Did they get it right? No one who is left can say.

IN ARIZONA THE FOREST SERVICE and environmentalists are up in arms over the predations of the West's latest arrival, the New Age Movement. According to Colorado's *High Country News*, the Coconino National Forest has been deluged with visitors seeking “energy vortexes,” from which consciousness-raising earth energy emanates. In their zeal pilgrims have trampled delicate vegetation and contributed to soil erosion, bring-



ing into doubt the natural alliance between New Age tolerance and ecological correctness. Some even rearrange rocks into “medicine wheels,” ring-shaped copies of Indian shrines with diameters that can stretch to 200 feet which is no doubt spiritually uplifting but is bound to upset the park ranger. The most dubious defense of these ecological vandals is offered by the manager of the Crystal Magic bookstore in nearby Sedona: “There are many people who would argue that ‘medicine wheels’ belong on the landscape . . . that they date back to the American Indians and that [the New Agers] have a spiritual right to build them. What the New Agers have in common with these Indians is something, I suppose, you need the aid of an energy vortex to discern.”

TWO YEARS AGO A FRIEND LED me through the library of Jesus College, Cambridge. In a display case off the main corridor there is a musty little book, the work of an English missionary who ministered to a Massachusetts tribe in the 1600s. For years he labored to translate the gospel into their language. By the time the manuscript was printed and bound, however, most of the people it was meant for had either been killed or had died of disease. The book is a strange emblem for Christians, a Bible that nobody was left to read. What would the Indians have thought if they'd had the chance to read it through? I guess we'll have to wait for the movie.

AIMS MCGUINNES

In Search of Cures for California's Growing Pains

California. The very name conjures up gold rushes and endless summers. But the California dream has a dark side. Air pollution. Clogged highways. Housing shortages. The side effects of rampant growth.

It is to encourage discussion of potential solutions for such problems that Hitachi, Ltd., along with leading civic organizations, sponsors the California Public Affairs Forum series. Inaugurated in 1987, the series affords business, government and community leaders a unique opportunity to be heard on issues that affect Californians.

At the inaugural Forum in Los Angeles, futurist Alvin Toffler addressed California's transportation crisis. The Forum was repeated in San Francisco a week later.

In 1989 the Forum returned by popular demand in an expanded format. On November 2 the Forum convened in San Francisco to address the growing imbalance between jobs and housing in the San Francisco Bay Area. A week later in Los Angeles the Forum's subject was

how to strike a balance between economic growth and air quality. Both events attracted some 200 state and local officials and business leaders even in the aftermath of the region's biggest earthquake in nearly a century.

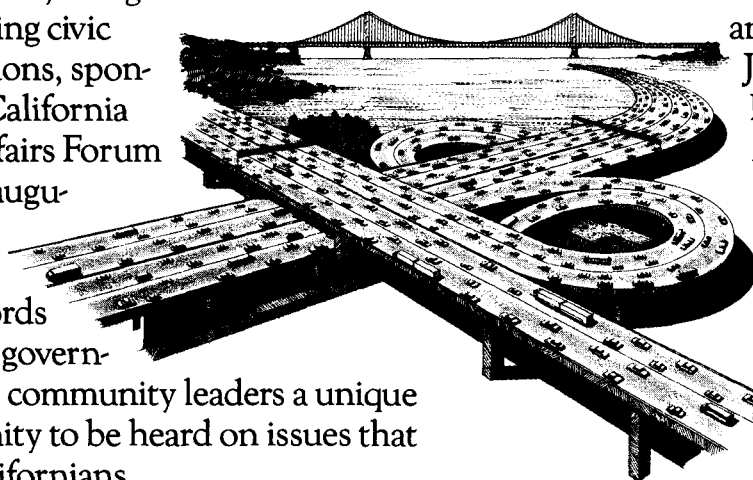
Such attendance is hardly surprising with nationally noted speakers like U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp, The EPA's Principal Assistant Administrator and such key local officials as the Deputy Director of California's Department of Housing and Community Development and the Executive Director of the South Coast Air Quality

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